

THE SPEED ISSUE

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ISSUE 04

PS2

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PC

GBA

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N64

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IT'S GOT THAT
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FRENCH GUY IN IT!
FIRST SCREENS
INSIDE...
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TODAY AND THE ONES YOU'LL WANT TOMORROW!



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WE HACK INTO ION
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CAN AN ONLINE MODE ELEVATE CAPCOM'S RACER TO POLE POSITION?

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2003 MAY

ISSUE 04

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SO, AUTO MODELLISTA'S A BIT CRAP, BUT WELCOME ANYWAY TO ISSUE 4 OF GMR.



Firstly, you have never known true horror until you've sat through the DVD version of *The Cannonball Run*, starring Burt Reynolds. Secondly (and not entirely unrelated), welcome to the Speed Issue, the emergency break at the news of Capcom's *Onimusha 3* before flopping it out of the turn through Front (passing some very useful game info). Then it's straight into the Reviews section, where *Dus Ex 2* is so dark, we have to fumble for the high beams—accidentally blinding Lara Croft on the way out, who lacking much AI, even at this late stage, fails to look away. James may even lean out of the window and make an obscene gesture. Redlining in third, we pop the clutch and speed into 14 pages of driving games. Then we race into a left turn. And then another left. And...another left. Pfister points to the signs and says "NASCAR" like a speak-your-weight machine, and a swift handbrake right is all it takes to pull us out of that page, sling-shooting us past some great stuff about tuning cars that Milly wrote. On the way into the Reviews section, we almost hit *Auto Modellista*, which has blown a tire and is wobbling in the center lane, just as *Motor* and *Coin Moxie 3* fly past on their way to The List. For a moment, I feel a presence behind the driver's seat, and I swear that a red dot of light is moving slowly across Tom's ample forehead as we speed away from Reviews and into the dawn, a *Golden Sun* blinding us all.

And all that in Gerry's teal 1993 Geo Prism.

Simon Cox, Editor-in-Chief

SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN



TALK DIRTY TO ME
JAMES MILKE
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Never seen you? Look so good Much like the dad in *A Christmas Story*. Milke's tapestry of hilarious profanity currently shares airspace with the fog over San Francisco Bay. We'd print some of the brilliance, but it's really something that should be experienced in person.



PILLEN PUSSEL
ANDREW PFISTER
WRITER

Too much: Too soon When not shooting stick at the local brewery, the ironically nicknamed 'Lil Tom is most likely working a triple shift and rockin' the 'Poison throughout the office. Like CeCe's guitar solos, his reviews are often described as "totally wicked."



LOOK WHAT THE CRT BRANDED IN
TOM PRICE
NEWS EDITOR

Ain't seen home: The last three days Now that the training of Pfister is complete, Tom turns his attention to baseball and the Giants' eventual World Series victory. And no, skipping out of work to catch the afternoon game at Pac Bell doesn't have anything to do with it. Nothing at all.



UNKNOWY BOB
GERRY SEARANO
ART DIRECTOR

What's Got You: So jumpy? Gerry still hasn't exploded on us yet, which is admirable considering Simon's barrage of underwear jokes that, apparently, only he understands. We anticipate the boss will be the first to go, as claims have been made to his comfy office couch.



NOTHING BUT A GOOD TIME
DAVID CHEN
MANAGING EDITOR

Don't get: Better than this "Let's go on a bender tonight." Famous last words, especially when spoken in the vicinity of one David Chen. Simon made that mistake (more like, opportunity-stake), and now Chinatown will never be the same. Yes, there are pictures.



EVERY ROSE HAS ITS THORN
CAROLANNE KINGS
DESIGNER

Cuts like: A knife Caroline actually played a videogame this month, obtaining the high score in *Burnout 2* and colling the rest of the staff "losers." She then used her thumb and forefinger to fashion a crude "L" near her forehead to emphasize that we were, in fact, losers.



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POST

WELCOME TO OUR LETTERS SECTION. WHERE READERS CONTINUE THEIR LOVE/HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH US THROUGH ALTERNATING PRAISE AND DISGUST. SOMETIMES ALL IN THE SAME LETTER.

NINJA PLEASE

When you talk about *Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven* in Issue #3, why the heck do you call ninjas better than samurai? I mean, yes, their outfits are cooler, but they suck! Samurai are honorable in battle, whereas ninjas are killers for hire! You have some serious issues. Minus that, however, keep up the good work on your new mag!

Stelly Brunette

We have some serious issues?

CONSOLES OFFLINE

Every magazine I pick up and every article I read online states that online console gaming is here to stay. I'm wondering if it's even planning on entering the front door anytime soon. How can you put so much faith in online gaming when developers don't even acknowledge its existence? There are dozens of games that have come out since the release of the PS2 Network Adaptor that just BEG for network capabilities. How in God's name can you release *Marvel vs. Capcom 2* and *Guitar Hero 2* with no online support? While you're at it, why not ship driving games where the cars don't have tires? It's insanity. What's worse is these developers aren't chastised for their incompetence/laziness. It seems as if it's not sports related, it doesn't even get considered for network capabilities. Almost every PC game comes out with



online support, especially titles that would suck without it (FPSes primarily). PC games that were meant for online play that don't get it are either quickly patched or fail to sell, because they don't deserve to sell.

Why can't the console industry pick up the ball? I personally think it's because people aren't paying any attention to the constant fumbling developers are doing. Why aren't the fans speaking up? Why aren't games getting lower ratings because of these poor development decisions? WHY ARE PEOPLE STILL BUYING INFERIOR HALF-ASSED PRODUCTS??

I'm not saying any game without network

capabilities should automatically be avoided, but every fighting game and FPS released should be playable online—no ifs, ands, or buts.

With that being said, I hope fans of games, whether they be the staff of GMR or the people who spend their time at EB every Wednesday, speak with the most important tool they have: their money.

Chris Langro

FANBOY FEARS

I'm a very, very scared Nintendo fanboy. I'm always hearing rumors about Nintendo not making another console

and becoming a "drifter" like Sega, just making games for different consoles. And then there's also all this stuff going on about game developers sorta leaning away from GameCube, as if thinking "this is a sinking system, and its not taking me down with it." Even Rare, which was one of Nintendo's prime suppliers, has abandoned the company for Xbox. This is really starting to freak me. I see dead franchises" type of freak me. And now I hear that Nintendo is starting to cut development on lots of its games. What do you guys think? Got any news to cheer me up?

Jordan Seccareccia

We sure do. Check out the Front section for some uplifting Nintendo info.

THE LEGEND CONTINUES

In Issue #3, you guys reviewed *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* for GC. You stated that near the end, the game got somewhat repetitive and boring as you had to collect various Triforce maps, get them translated, find the pieces, etc. But Mr. Miyamoto has gone on record saying, "We had a lot of feedback that the collection of Triforce pieces in the game was kind of difficult or tedious, so we actually made some changes to that part of the spec for the U.S. version, and that'll be reflected in the first build, which will be coming out next month." So what's the deal, guys? Did you get an incomplete U.S. version of the game?

WRITE US: GMR@ZIFFDAVIS.COM

Were you going off the Japanese copy? What happened? It seems to me one of the only things keeping this game from a 10 is that Triforce hao-ha. If this stuff is changed, would it affect your score, and will you state that you received an incomplete build—if in fact, you did get an incomplete build? Thanks!

Dart533

Here's the lowdown on *Zelda*: In the Japanese version, it cost a lot to translate the Triforce maps. In the final English version (the one we reviewed), each map took only 400 rupees, which is less than the import. No official word from Nintendo yet, but we assume this was what Miyamoto meant when he talked about the English version being less tedious. Our review score stands. And by the way, we review only finished games.

PC GAMES AROOL!

PLEASE focus more on PC games than your competitors. PC games are rapidly becoming the underdog market, with so many "console-kiddies" out there. I mean, people are actually saying *Unreal II* sucks because it's not *Halo*... This confuses me, no console will ever match the pure graphical quality (and tweakableness) of a good PC game. This is a travesty; people must be educated on the virtues of PC games. Your competitors mostly review console games, mostly ignoring the sheer geekiness of most PC games, please break this mold!

The PC market is getting better than ever (thank you Blizzard, Id, and Epic), and though it might lack the affordability and mass-appeal of the console market, innovation is born with the PC.

Good luck with your mag!

Rev. Q.A.

GMA = SONY FANBOYS

I've been suspicious for a long-ass while that the only system you guys give a

squat about is PlayStation 2. I mean, that's what you talk about almost all the time. Face it, out of the three issues you guys have published, only one cover had an Xbox game on it. And you guys haven't even done a cover with a GameCube game. *Zelda* would've been nice.

haloboyes

I noticed that in Issue #2 of your lovely magazine, you guys reviewed only one Xbox and one GameCube game, while PlayStation 2 and PC games got many reviews. Now, I know there was more than one Xbox and GameCube game to come out during this time period. Where's the love for the big X and the little N?

Concerned Gamer

We realize that out of a whopping three issues, we've had only one Xbox game on the cover. Forgiveness, please! *Zelda* wasn't on the cover because it was on the cover of every other magazine already, and if we had put it on the cover, a great game like *2002* wouldn't get the attention it deserves. We cover what we deem to be interesting, regardless of the platform. It's not our fault that the majority of games these days, interesting or not, are released for PS2. That's just how the numbers work.

BLIND DATE

Where do you get the info on game release dates. I mean, March 3 for *The Lost*? That game is so far off, it isn't even listed on the EB list of upcoming PS2 games. March 15 for *Star Ocean: Till the End of Time*? The game has been pushed back so many times, it is now due in Sept. or Oct. Once again, merely check for upcoming releases at EB.com.

JZ Zaranka
Rahway, NJ

Release dates are a fickle beast, and it should be said that the dates listed in



Game Planner are never, ever set in stone. We get our information from our new best friends at EB, who in turn gets their dates from game publishers. Of course, the publishers just make them up to mess with your head.

HOW SOON IS NOW?

I have been a subscriber to your magazine since Issue #1, and I enjoy certain parts of it. I realize that this magazine comes from a "gaming" background, but I am disappointed in your coverage of upcoming baseball games. Mainly, the exclusion of both Sony and Microsoft first-party baseball games.

I own both a PS2 and an Xbox. I cannot understand how you can have a two-page feature and leave out 989 Sports' *MLB 2004*, and Microsoft's baseball game. I realize that in the past, many 989 Sports entries have been somewhat lackluster, but I still think 2004 should've been in your review of the sports titles. 989 Sports even took a year off from releasing a baseball game (last year), so I was extremely curious to see if the year off gave the company time to polish the game up to industry standards.

If you are going to review baseball games, I would expect a stand-up magazine to review all the baseball games together. Being a new subscriber, this is the stuff that I look for in a magazine in order to decide if I am going to renew my subscription. For a major sports game to be released and not reviewed in the baseball review section was a disappointment. I hope things change in the near future.

Craig Rudzenski

We didn't review the 989 or Microsoft games for one simple reason: We didn't get code in time. Welcome to the world of editorial deadlines. 989's *MLB 2004* is reviewed in this issue (pg. 71), and we'll review the MS game when it shows up.

YOU FANTASTIC JERKS

Dear Idiots,

Why do you idiots have to score games on a 10-point scale? [we cut the body of this letter out because it was stupid - Ed] You're starting to become the best multipatform mag in my eyes. Keep up the good work.

Joseph Lindley

Wait, do you like us or hate us? Make up your damn fool mind. ☹

"EVERY MAGAZINE STATES THAT ONLINE CONSOLE GAMING IS HERE TO STAY. I'M WONDERING IF IT'S EVEN PLANNING ON ENTERING THE FRONT DOOR ANY TIME SOON."

FRONT

GMR NEWS NETWORK



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Woo-woooo!



LE SAMURAI

SO WHO'S IN ONIMUSHA 3? I DUNNO. JEAN RENO?

BREAKING NEWS

➔ It all started when Capcom digitized Asian heartthrob Takeshi Kaneshiro to star in the original *Onimusha*. It raised the stakes for the sequel by resurrecting the late Yuusaku Matsuda. How can it top that? Simple. Bring in noted movie badass Jean Reno (*La Femme Nikita*, *The Professional*) for the concluding chapter of the series. And then double the hero action by bringing back Kaneshiro to co-star.

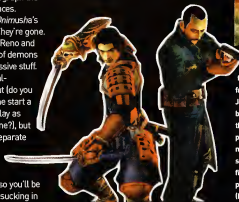
The story is split between two locations, beginning in 1582 Japan. Samanosuke (Kaneshiro) prepares for his final battle with evil overlord Oda Nobunaga, having vanquished his minions in the original *Onimusha*. Fast-forward a few centuries to France, 2004, where a peaceful village has been overrun by Nobunaga's demons. Enter a lone soldier to stand up and fight... Jacques Bran (Reno). However, Bran will have help... from Samanosuke, who chased his nemesis through time.

Onimusha 3's star power isn't limited to the heroes. Joining producer Keiji Inafune's team is Hong Kong actor and director Donnie Yen to choreograph the action in the CG story sequences. Speaking of CG, remember *Onimusha*'s 2D rendered backgrounds? They're gone. *O3* is in full 3D and watching Reno and Kaneshiro slicing up hordes of demons in ruined cityscapes is impressive stuff.

It's not known how the dual-character system will play out (do you select your character from the start a la *Resident Evil 2*) or do you play as both through a single story line?), but it's apparent both will have separate styles of play, thanks to Jacques's submachine gun. He has been pictured with a sword and gauntlet, though, so you'll be able to do just as much soul-sucking in modern France as in ancient Japan.

You'll have to wait a while to slice and dice demons, because *Onimusha 3* isn't

due until next spring, but if you can't wait that long, check out our sidebar for yet another *Onimusha* title. 16



"Eh, you take ze peegs on ze left, I'll take ze demons on ze right. Merde!"

SLICEICUS REX

SAMANOSUKE VS. JUBEI YAGI? YEAH, BABY! BRING IT ON! I SAID BRING IT ON!



Also announced—but totally overshadowed by *Onimusha 3*—was *Onimusha Blade*, a four-player fighting game using characters from the first two *Onimusha* games (sorry, no Jean Reno for you). Eschewing pre-rendered backdrops for a fully polygonal environment, the game vaguely resembles *Power Stone* as played with samurai—no bad thing by any means. The title, based on what little we've seen, has potential. Given *Onimusha*'s fast and fluid combat system, we're looking forward to pitting the likes of Samanosuke, Jubei and (Mikami's feathered favorite) Oya in a frantic multiplayer battle. How the soul system will work here hasn't been revealed yet, though. Expect *Onimusha Blade* this November.

INFOMANIA!
THE LATEST ON...

BREED

Brat Designs is hard at work on *Breed*, an ambitious FPS that finds a ragtag band of space marines fighting to liberate the remnants of mankind. The angle? Levels can reach 200 square miles—that's big.

Naturally, good scripting and creative mission-design are crucial to the game's success. The world has seen a whole lotta mechanized men hashing it out with a whole lotta alien invaders.

Furthermore, as we've seen with *Triebes 2*, big levels don't always make for big fun.

Brat plans to address this problem with a final product that's a bit broader than your standard strafe-n-shoot. The manned arsenal should include airborne and land-based vehicles, mounted artillery, and alien craft—you'll also have the ability to relay simple directions to your team on the fly. As told to sister publication *XBN*, Brat is keen on bringing this admittedly Halo-esque title to Xbox. Makes sense to us.

For more information on *Breed*, check out *XBN* #7. **E**

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[TALENT]

★ WARREN SPECTOR

THE KING OF CONSPIRACY THEORIES

➔ With a shadowy name like Warren Spector, you'd expect the creator of the critically-acclaimed *Deus Ex* series to be an enigmatic cigarette-smoking man, working his mysterious magic behind the machine. But here are some facts about the real Spector of gaming: 1) He's a Texan. 2) He doesn't smoke. And 3) He thinks *EverQuest* is a drag. "I can't stand online RPGs," says Spector. "To me, games like *EverQuest* are just graphical chat rooms. I've literally seen someone—an artist here at Ion Storm [Spector's game studio]—who used to be a total *EverQuest* geek, and he literally stuck pencils in his keyboard to automate the process of running across the game world." While he might disdain certain gaming fantasies online, Spector began his industry career designing paper-

and-dice RPGs for Steve Jackson Games in Austin. Best known for *Car Wars*, a lethargic and meticulous board game simulation of fast-paced vehicular combat, Steve Jackson Games put Spector in touch with industry contemporaries looking to ditch the dice and design games with a control pad in mind. In 1989, Spector joined now-defunct Origin Systems to contribute and produce *Ultima VI*, *Ultima VII*, and *System Shock*, a first-person RPG many consider an important precursor to his *Deus Ex* series. Spector joined Ion Storm in 1997 and presently resides as the studio's managing director, where he oversees production on Xbox titles such as *DIXIE*, *The Invisible War* and *Thief III*. Both games will be out late this year. **E**

—Che Chou



HALO 2 BUMPAGE

BUNGIE SAYS 2004. WE SAY DAMMMMMINI!

U.S.A.

➔ Bungie announced that *Halo 2* won't be home for Christmas 2003. To find out what's up wit dat, we spoke to Pete Parsons, director of marketing, Microsoft Game Studios:

GMR: So what's up, dawg? What's on ya mind?

P.P.: Well, as you may have heard, *Halo 2* will not be released during 2003. I know we [Bungie] said we'd like to have it ready for holiday '03, but the most important thing is that we get the game right. We're excited about Xbox and Xbox Live, and want to be able to incorporate all these exciting game features.

GMR: Dammmmmni, that hella blows, mang! It goes without saying that while Xbox has many great games on it, the only

one that really matters is *Halo*. Why did you choose GDC as the forum to let us in on this galactic bumme?

P.P.: It's important that we let the fans know what we're doing now, rather than later. We've always had a good interaction with the fans, so we thought they deserved to know what's up.

GMR: You know this is really about the kids, hoss.

P.P.: Yes, that's why we pushed the game back. It's important to do it right. It is about the kids and that's why we're telling them now about it. We're making the game the way we want to make it and to do that right—it takes time.

GMR: Gimme a ray of light, yo. What's up with the PC and Mac versions of *Halo*?

Urban myth? Cold, hawd, troof? You tell me.

P.P.: Not urban myth. *Halo* PC and *Halo* Mac are still planned for 2003.

GMR: Have you seen the toys, playa? Wack or not wack?

P.P.: Yes, I have. I think the initial release that went out didn't do the toys justice.

We're working closely with Joyride. We're making sure they're really good.

GMR: What's up with a new *Marathon*? Got any scoops? You give me a scoop, I'll give you a scoop.

P.P.: Well, we never talk about the other stuff we're working on. But we do have people working on other projects.

GMR: I ain't givin' you no scoop, cuz that was a half-scoop. Psyche! **E**



[BLIPS]

Ghouls & Ghost Online

➔ Taiwanese developer Game Factory is taking the classic Capcom franchise into the massively multiplayer realm. It's still a long ways off, but *Ghouls 'N' Ghosts Online* will be coming out for PS2, Xbox, and the PC and cross-platform play will be attempted—that's an awful lot of heart-print underwear

Castlevania PS2

➔ Surprising no one, and exciting just about everyone, Konami of America has confirmed the *Castlevania* series is coming to the PS2 this fall. Concrete details won't come to light until E3, but with *Symphony of the Night* producer Koji Igarashi at the helm, at least, expect something far more impressive than N64's *Legacy of Darkness*.



→ Kirby's Air Ride was originally planned as an N64 game before it was scrapped. Apparently, there were too many N64 games. Could the pink puff's resurrection be the work of former HAL chief and current NCL president Satoru Iweta? Probably.



NINTENDO LOVE

SOLID SNAKE LEADS THE GAMECUBE CHARGE

NEWS

It's been a rough couple of months for Nintendo. Mario Sunshine didn't sell like a Mario game should, Metroid got beat by Splinter Cell in holiday sales, and there hasn't been much going on in the early part of the year. But with the impending releases of Zelda, Pokémon, 1080 White Storm, and Mario World, and the recent announcements of Pikmin 2 and Kirby's Air Ride, it seems the Big N is starting to turn up the pre-E3 heat.

The company gave a live demonstration of the spectacular-looking F-Zero AC sure to be an E3 highlight at the recent AOU arcade show in Japan. The cabinet itself moves from side to side in concert with the onscreen action, and it features a GameCube memory card slot for data transfers between the arcade and home versions.

Shortly after the show, Nintendo

figurehead Shigeru Miyamoto took a Vegas vacation, just in time for the DICE (Design, Innovate, Communicate, Entertain) summit. There he spoke of new titles appearing at E3, potentially using a darker and more realistic theme for the next Zelda game, and a new Donkey Kong game developed by EAD. Unfortunately, he was rather vague about Nintendo's online plans. Don't expect to see anything major at E3, and we recommend preparing yourself for the disappointment of a non online Mario Kart. (go to gamers.com for the full interview.)

He also let slip an interesting item: Nintendo and Konami are working together on a new Metal Gear Solid project. We bet it's a multiplatform remake of the original Metal Gear Solid with some sort of GBA functionality built into the GC version. It's not MGS3 (yet), but considering Konami's support up until now has consisted of

Disney Sports games, it's a major step forward.

Speaking of improved support, to counter the untimely evacuation of Sega Sports, EA has just reaffirmed their GameCube love by announcing the development of 20 titles for 2004. Madden and SSX are already on GC, so why is this news? Because Miyamoto himself is working with EA to incorporate GBA link functions into the games. See, now you're interested.

And if you're still not fully convinced Nintendo is sticking to the console hardware business, consider its new agreement with graphics powerhouse ATI for "developing technologies for use in Nintendo products." Gosh, wonder what they mean by that.



FOUND!

GMR SCOURS THE GLOBE



Z.O.E. 2 BOXED SET LIMITED EDITION

ORIGIN: JAPAN

This hefty orange boxed set includes the Japanese version of ZOE: The 2nd Runner (that's Anubis: Zone of the Enders to you); the official game soundtrack; a gorgeous, glossy art book, and a sculpture of Jehuty that looks suspiciously like it's made out of marzipan. Oh yes, and a lock of Hideo Kojima's hair, too—you know you want some of that. \$4-

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[BLIPS]

Reservoir Dogs

European publisher Sci Games Limited has announced it will be publishing a game based on 1992 crime caper *Reservoir Dogs* for PS2 and Xbox. So, why aren't we enthused? Because it doesn't make sense. What are you going to do, cut peoples ears off? Actually, that might be cool.

Almost Famous

EA Games will release the sixth expansion pack for its juggernaut PC franchise *The Sims* this May. *The Sims: Superstar* will give fans the chance to live their dreams of fame and celebrity by becoming a rock star, actor, or supermodel among other glamorous professions.

64-bit Counter-Strike

Valve Software, creator of Half-Life and steward of its most popular mod, Counter-Strike, announced a 64-bit CS server that takes advantage of the new AMD Opteron™ processor. No word yet on what happened to *Terramanga* 2 or any other game it's supposedly been working on.

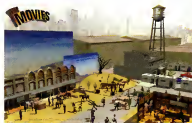


BREATH TAKING DRAGON EMPIRES TAKES FLIGHT

U.K.

Set to begin beta-testing in May, *Dragon Empires* is a massively ambitious MMORPG from U.K.-based developer Codemasters. Set in a richly organic fantasy realm that's separated into five distinct empires (each ruled by a fierce dragon), the game requires players to form clans and fight for domination of more than 50 cities. Those not keen on joining an army can become craftsmen, traders, or outlaws, roaming the game's huge

deserts, rain forests, and mountain ranges. Quests will be set by NPCs, and there'll be a wealth of weapons to employ, monsters to encounter, and buildings to construct. Codemasters has had time to learn from the mistakes of *EverQuest* et al, so expect a polished, visually stunning experience, with none of the frustrations, repetitions, and flagrant cheating on display in other online titles. **E+**
—Keith Stuart



SMALL SCREEN MAKE MOVIES WITH LIONHEAD

U.K.

If anyone can pull off this idea, it's the wildly ambitious Lionhead Studios. Peter Molyneux's codeshop has already produced groundbreaking hits like *Black and White* and *Creature Isle*. In that same groundbreaking vein is the recently revealed game, *The Mowies*.

Starting in the 1920s, *The Mowies* puts you in charge of a movie studio. You run the whole show—from the finances to the creative stuff—and yes, you get to direct your own movies, which includes such responsibilities as placing the camera and choosing the dialogue.

When you're done, you have a little movie, complete with a trailer and automatically generated website. You can then upload the trailer for the critiquing public to vote on how well you did. But before you reach that point, you have to find the cash, hire the help, build the sets, and deal with the actors' egos. No word on whether you have to buy your own Armani suits or obligatory black Range Rover, but there's still time.

As with all of Molyneux's projects, a release date remains elusive, but GMR estimates we could see *The Mowies* by Christmas. **E+**
—Simon Cox

GAMEPORT VITAL GAME INFO, NOW BOARDING.

✈ Arrivals COMING SOON

SYSTEM	ETA	TITLE	HOW HOT?
GC	APR	1080 WHITE STORM Nintendo's snowboarder arrives just in time for summer.	🔥🔥
XBOX	APR	PHANTASY STAR ONLINE Sera would like your money now, please.	🔥🔥
PS2/XB/PC	APR	MIDNIGHT CLUB II At least it controls better than <i>Auto Modellista</i> .	🔥🔥
PC	MAY	PLANETSIDE Fight for truth, justice, and whoever doesn't return fire.	🔥🔥
PC	MAY	STAR WARS GALAXIES You won't become a Jedi, but that'll only make you try harder.	🔥🔥🔥
GBA	MAY	CASTLEVANIA: ARIA OF SOLEND The new one's just in time for the Game Boy Player.	🔥🔥🔥
GC	MAY	WARIO WORLD We're hoping Nintendo doesn't pull another <i>Stretch Panic</i> .	🔥🔥🔥
ALL	MAY	ENTER THE MATRIX Hype. Lots of hype.	🔥🔥
GC/XBOX	MAY	STAR WARS KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC Look for a big preview next month.	🔥🔥🔥
XBOX	MAY	RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN: TIDES OF WAR Return? Why, it's like we never left!	🔥🔥🔥
XBOX	MAY	WWE RAW 2 You can't online, we will hit someone with a chair.	🔥🔥
PC	MAY	GTA: VICE CITY GTAA's looking drastically better, and we expect the same for VC.	🔥🔥🔥
XBOX	MAY	BRUTE FORCE Four-player co-op on four (linked Xboxes)? Heck yes.	🔥🔥🔥
GC	JUNE	SONIC ADVENTURE DX Good to see Sonic Team working the fresh and original ideas!	🔥
PC/XBOX	JUNE	DEUS EX 2: INVISIBLE WAR Set 20 years after the first game. We can't wait that long.	🔥🔥
GC	JUNE	F-ZERO If elected, GMR will put an F-Zero arcade machine in every home.	🔥🔥🔥

✈ DEPARTURES OUT NOW

SYSTEM	TITLE	GMR SCORE
PS2	ZONE OF THE ENDERS: THE 2ND RUNNER It's still a bit short, but it's quite the roller-coaster ride.	8 ¹⁰
PS2	DARK CLOUD 2 The custom weapon building comes N/A-approved.	9 ¹⁰
PS2	BREATH OF FIRE 5 No, really. You're supposed to die. A lot, actually.	6 ¹⁰
GC	LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER Not surprisingly, tied with Metroid and Mario for best GC game.	9 ¹⁰
PS2	DEVIL MAY CRY 2 Running up the wall is cool. Shooting for 5 minutes is not.	6 ¹⁰
PC	UNREAL II The only thing that's unreal is the required hardware.	8 ¹⁰
PS2	WINNING ELEVEN 6 Believe it or not, it's better than FIFA. EA can't have everything!	9 ¹⁰
PS2/GC/XBOX	RAYMAN 3 The usually sleepy platformer takes a tumble off the ledge.	5 ¹⁰
PS2/GC/XBOX/PC	HIGH HEAT BASEBALL 2004 A sim to sleep, you choose and cut down the tree for your bat.	9 ¹⁰
PS2	MY STREET A balanced mix of boring and dumb. Kick it to the curb.	3 ¹⁰
XBOX	INDIANA JONES & THE EMPORER'S TOMB When a problem comes along, you must whip it.	7 ¹⁰
XBOX	KUNG FU CHAOS About as funny as being locked in the Adam's apple.	6 ¹⁰
PS2	DEF JAM VENDETTA Dropping the bomb beats, along with those who make them.	7 ¹⁰
PS2/XBOX/GC	VEXX Mascots cannot just be created—they must be born.	5 ¹⁰
PS2	TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN The PS2 provides the series with a much-needed boost.	8 ¹⁰
PS2	THE KING OF ROUTE 66 Lie using the restroom at a truck stop: only if you have to.	6 ¹⁰



GameSpy 2002 PS2 Game of the Year!

"A rare must own title."
-EGM, Editors Choice Gold Award



"Funny, smart, richly entertaining
and superbly crafted." -OPM, 5/5

"Still the Best!" -GamePro, 5/5

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"Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 is easily the
best game in the series..." -IGN.com

THE CRITICS HAVE SPOKEN...

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PlayStation
2

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with PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system.



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JOHN DAVISON

TEST DRIVE

➔ A buddy of mine bought a Subaru WRX because of GT3, and when that didn't prove fast or scary enough for him, he swapped it for a Mitsubishi Evo VII. Why? Well, partly because of Evolution Studios' WRC: World Rally Championship (released in limited numbers in the United States by Barn), Aston Martin, the Top shelf British sports car maker (and supplier to James Bond) asserts it's brand awareness in the United States has jumped significantly thanks to the Gran Turismo franchise. Nissan, after its successful relaunch of the Z sports car brand last year, will be bringing the successor to the infamously brutal Skyline GT-R to U.S. consumers in part because the vehicle is held in such high esteem by what Nissan calls the "PlayStation generation." Lamborghini, Ferrari, Porsche, and Mercedes have all worked with developers on brand-specific racing games. Why am I telling you all this stuff? Because videogames sell cars. The automotive industry has relied heavily on product placement for years; the Mustang in *Bullitt*, the DB5 in *Goldfinger*, the Firebird in *Knight Rider*, the Focus in last week's *Alias*. Seeing a secret agent kick out the back end in a tire-smoking car chase is nothing compared to being able to try out something that feels like the real thing, and the car industry knows it. ☹

...John Davison is Editor-in-Chief of the Official PlayStation Magazine.

GMR CHARTS

THE TOP-SELLING GAMES FOR EVERY SYSTEM FOR FEB. '03

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TOP 10 ALL FORMATS

RANK	TITLE	FORMAT	SCORE
01	THE GETAWAY It's good, but we'd rather sit around and watch Get Carter and Sexy Beast on DVD.	PS2	8
02	C & C: GENERALS The C&C name attracts a lot of gamers; so do the new factions and 3D graphics.	PC	9
03	XENOSAGA Admit it. You didn't think a 50-hour long Nietzschean space epic would be this popular.	PS2	9
04	UO: AGE OF SHADOWS Are people still playing Ultima Online? Apparently so.	PC	7
05	HACK//INFECTION The game within a game is selling like hotcakes within hotcakes	PS2	7
06	BF1942: THE ROAD TO ROME Forget Counter-Strike. BF1942 is the new must-play online kill-your-friends fest.	PC	7
07	DEVIL MAY CRY 2 We wish he would cry and get it over with.	PS2	6
08	GTA3: VICE CITY The gaming equivalent of Michael Jackson's Thriller.	PS2	10
09	YU GI OH! Pokemon, Digimon, Yu-Gi-Oh!, whatever. When are pogs making a comeback?	PS2	8
10	DARK CLOUD 2 It's better than the first and one of the best RPGs ever. Believe that.	PS2	9

PS2 TOP 10

	SCORE
01 THE GETAWAY	8
02 XENOSAGA	9
03 HACK//INFECTION	7
04 DEVIL MAY CRY 2	6
05 GTA: VICE CITY	10
06 YU GI OH!	6
07 DARK CLOUD 2	9
08 THE SIMS	9
09 GUILTY GEAR X2	8
10 NBA LIVE 2003	8

XBOX TOP 10

	SCORE
01 DOA: XTREME VOLLEYBALL	8
02 UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP	8
03 INDIANA JONES	7
04 CAPCOM VS. SNK2	8
05 SPLINTER CELL	9
06 TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON	8
07 HALO	10
08 APEX	8
09 ATV QUAD POWER RACING 2	6
10 ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2004	7

PC TOP 10

	SCORE
01 C&C: GENERALS	6
02 UO: AGE OF SHADOWS	7
03 BF1942: ROAD TO ROME	7
04 MASTER OF ORION 3	7
05 UNREAL 2	8
06 NASCAR RACING 2003	8
07 SPLINTER CELL	9
08 SIM CITY 4	8
09 THE SIMS DELUXE	10
10 BATTLEFIELD 1942	9

GBA TOP 10

	SCORE
01 YU-GI-OH! DUNGEON	6
02 LEGEND OF ZELDA	10
03 YU-GI-OH! ETERNAL DUELIST	5
04 METROID FUSION	9
05 YOSHI'S ISLAND	9
06 SUPER MARIO WORLD	9
07 KIRBY: NIGHTMARE IN DREAMLAND	7
08 STUART LITTLE 2	7
09 GOLDEN SUN	8
10 MARIO KART ADV	7

GC TOP 10

	SCORE
01 METROID PRIME	10
02 HUNTER	6
03 SKIES OF ARCADIA	9
04 NBA 2K3	9
05 MARIO PARTY 4	8
06 RESIDENT EVIL 0	9
07 SUPER SMASH BROS.	9
08 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS	8
09 BLOODRAYNE	6
10 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE	8

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JEFF GREEN

WAIT GAIN

➔ Conventional wisdom, if such a thing exists in the gaming biz, says the longer a game is delayed, the more it's gonna suck when it finally *if* ever comes out. Exhibit A: *Darkfall*. Exhibit B: *Master of Orion 3*. But hey kids, let's not linger on the nasty this month. Let's celebrate life!

Yes, every once in a while miracles do occur, and a game that's been in developmental hell for years will somehow defy the odds and magically not suck. I direct your attention to *Freelancer*—a game that not only didn't turn out bad, but actually, incredibly, has turned out to be the first great game of 2003.

Forget the fact it should have been the first great game of 1999. Let's move on from that. Let's not be bitter. Furthermore, ignore the bleating of the Internet whiners complaining about the space sim's lack of joystick support. See, Microsoft would actually like more than 5 percent of gamers to be able to play this thing. No, it may not be the second coming of gaming, but it's damn good anyway. Very addictive, very open ended, and endlessly replayable; it's like some wacky combination of *Diablo*, *GTA3*, and *Freelancer*.

Who knows? Maybe this is a sign. Maybe this means that Duke Nukem Forever won't suck after all! Just kidding! ☹

Jeff Green is Editor-in-Chief of Computer Gaming World.

GBA SP: JUDGED!

WHAT DO THE GMR STAFF THINK OF THE NEW NINTENDO?

HANDHELD NEWS

THE FIST!
SUPER COMFORTABLE

➔ Finally, I can play my GBA games after sundown! My biggest concern were the size of the SP and the location of the shoulder buttons. Now that I've spent some time with it, I actually find the SP more comfortable than the old GBA. In the daytime or under lighting, the new front light doesn't do much. But in poor lighting conditions the benefit really kicks in. It's also nice not having to search for the perfect viewing angle. The only problem: My platinum model already has scratches on the casing, which detracts from the cool factor. Shame on Nintendo for not bringing the black model to the States. ☹

TOM
GAMING UNDER COVERS

➔ Lots of kids are going to appreciate having a backlit GBA for postbedtime gaming under the covers. Lots of kids are also going to give themselves monster headaches like I did. SP's screen is so bright, you can use it like a flashlight. The only other complaint I really have is the case—it looks cool, but there's little ergonomic thought put into it: It looks like a fat cell phone. Is Nintendo trying to prepare us for the future of handheld gaming devices? ☹

JAMES
WHERE'S THE HEADPHONE JACK?

➔ It's compact and well designed, and I don't have to worry about the screen getting all scratched up thanks to its clamshell design. Plus, the Li-Ion battery offers long life. The buttons are responsive, and the shoulder triggers, although smaller, are just as functional due to smart positioning. However, I always feel like I'm going to drop it, since it's so small, and the colors seem washed-out when the light is on. My biggest gripe is the lack of a headphone jack. Yeah, you can buy a headphone adapter, but why add another accessory when Nintendo could have engineered one in? ☹

SIMON
HEROIN CHIC!

➔ I thought the system was a bit crap at first. In sunlight, the screen—even with the new light—is still appallingly dim. But later, under the soulless strip lighting of our corporate prison, things brightened up...considerably. Later on, I played *Lord of the Rings* on it while sitting up in bed eating crackers, and it was great—bright enough to hunt down renegade crumbs. The less ambient light you have, the better this thing looks. [Although I saw Tom yesterday looking like he had the crud kicked out of him after playing it in the dark for an hour. Heroin chic, I think they call it.] ☹

DAVID
WORTH THE WAIT

➔ I got my GBA shortly after it shipped in Japan, and it immediately fell into disuse; I found it practically unplayable in daylight, not to mention dimmer conditions. Opting for Triton Labs' Afterburner kit changed my perspective (at the cost of my warranty), as suddenly a great library of games (both new and nostalgic) was at my disposal. Playing around with SP and its sexy casing makes me wish I'd waited...shame we lost the headphone jack, though. ☹

[BLIPS]

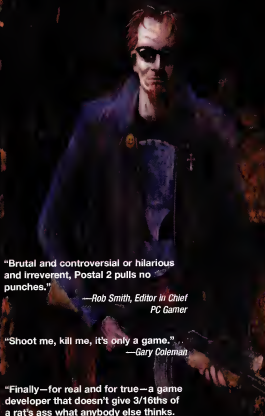
Bulletproof Monk game

➔ Empire Interactive has purchased the videogame rights to the upcoming John Woo film, *Bulletproof Monk*, starring Chow Yun Fat. U.K. developer Mucky Foot Productions will lead the multi-platform effort to its 2003 holiday release, eight months after the film's April debut. Expect lots of doves.

Texas Celebrity Game Developer News

➔ Former co-founders of the Gathering of Developers (the people who brought you Max Payne and a stripper-infested E3 booth) are in the news. Rick Stultz and Patrick Curry have started SkyLab Entertainment with a grip of ex-Ritual folks and former id dude Mike Wilson has gone crawling back to G.O.D.

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"Brutal and controversial or hilarious and irreverent, Postal 2 pulls no punches."

—Rob Smith, Editor in Chief
PC Gamer

"Shoot me, kill me, it's only a game."
—Gary Coleman

"Finally—for real and for true—a game developer that doesn't give 3/16ths of a rat's ass what anybody else thinks. Anybody. ANYbody."

—Chris Hudak,
Games Domain

"Drench 'em and light 'em. Postal 2 has such a way with gasoline."

—Computer Games Magazine

"Running With Scissors: great games, just don't go drinking with these guys."

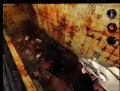
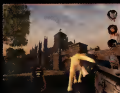
—Aaron Paul
Gamertv

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POSTAL 2

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NINTENDO
KNOWLEDGETHEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU
DON'T HAVE TO!

PHIL THEOBALD

IKA-WHO-GA?

➔ I would like, if I may, to talk about a very special game called *Ikaruga*. *Ikaruga* is a vertical-scrolling shooter created by fanboy-favorite developer, Treasure. It originally came out in Japan for Dreamcast in September 2002, and about four months later, it was ported to GameCube.

Here's a quick review of *Ikaruga*. It's good. Very good. We should be praising our various gods that a game like this exists at all, and—given the nonexistent state of shooters in the videogame industry—the fact that it's seeing a U.S. release [thanks to Infogrames] is truly a miracle.

Now that the introductions are out of the way, I want to speak to the hardcore gamers out there. You are the people [like myself] who know how good *Ikaruga* is and imported the DC [or GameCube] version. Now, it may be tempting to skip out on buying the U.S. release of the game, since you've been playing it for months now, but by doing so, you're just telling videogame companies that Americans don't want awe-inspiring shooters.

Infogrames picked up *Ikaruga* for your benefit, hardcore gamer. If you don't support *Ikaruga*, you're helping to ensure that other games like it never see the light of day on these shores. I'll gladly be picking up my second copy of *Ikaruga*—see that you do the same. **E**

Phil Theobald is Reviews Editor at GameZone.

MOTOR CITY OFFLINE

AND MORE EA.COM WOES

U.S.A.

➔ **Electronic Arts' decision to shutter Motor City Online shocked devoted fans of the online-only racing game, many of whom spent more than 15 hours a week in the game world.**

But industry insiders were only surprised at how long it took EA to pull the plug. While refusing to release exact numbers, a CNN Online story citing Wall Street sources estimated the number of registered MCO players to be "somewhere between 20,000 and 25,000"—nowhere near enough to support an online franchise many predicted to be the first to penetrate the mainstream market.

Unfortunately, EA's blend of modified cars, chat, and racing proved to be not very fun; the game received mostly negative reviews upon its release in November 2001. "Initially, MCO felt more like a chat room than a game," one subscriber commented on the Motor City message board shortly after the announcement. "The lack of fun at the start definitely discouraged gamers from playing."

The lack of fun also meant that Motor City Online, even after some quality improvements in June 2002, was near impossible to find. "The game had been completely unavailable on store shelves for up to a year in some locations," explained Misty Matson, project manager at Stratics Central.

Perhaps the real reason behind Motor City Online's closure, however, is the financial fallout of Electronic Arts' inability to deliver quality subscription-based online gaming experiences outside of Ultima Online. *Majesic*, an episodic conspiracy game, barely managed 15,000 paying players, while Westwood's *Earth & Beyond* similarly failed to capture gamers' imaginations and sold less than 60,000 copies.

Most recently, and most surprising, EA recently

acknowledged that *The Sims Online* is underperforming. With a membership base of under 100,000, this flagship title is far behind the company's aggressive expectations. Ironically, the problem is exactly the same as in *Motor City*—too much chatting and not enough playing.

In this case, MCO's closure might help. As a token of EA's support, current MCO players are being offered a free copy of *The Sims Online* or *Ultima Online*. **E**

—George Jones

SEGA + SAMMY = LOVE
STAYING ALIVE
JAPAN

➔ **When Square and Enix announced their merger last December (see GMR#11), the news rocked the gaming world. The companies' executives explained that this move was made to maintain their advanced position in the industry, the business of making and selling games not being so easy these days.**

Now, hot on the heels of the Square/Enix merger, a similar announcement was made by Sega this past February. According to the press release, Sega is going to integrate its management with Sammy by this October. The specific details of the merger will be announced in the upcoming months. Although Sammy is known for little else besides publishing the *Gulby Gear* series (and more recently, *Galerians*). Ashi, the company is one of the biggest pachinko makers in Japan. In

Japan, pachinko equals steady cash flow.

However, despite the seemingly innocuous merger, an ironic twist emerges. When Sega axed all of its hardware people due to its withdrawal from console business, Sammy was the company who absorbed many of the former Sega employees. A fact evidenced by Sammy's use of the SH-4 and PowerVR arcade boards. Does this mean will we see another console from Sega? Probably not in this lifetime. Sega is still trying to recover as a game developer/publisher. It's efforts to be the number one publisher in the industry keeps falling short of the mark, and because of that, Sega of America has recently endured another internal reorganization. While the final merger won't happen until later this year, it'll be interesting to see how Sega manages itself up until that pivotal day. **E**



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PlayStation.2



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EVAN SHARMOON

LIFESPAN,
UH, SPANNED

➔ With Sony firmly entrenched as the mainstream choice and GameCube sales deteriorating (with no assurance of a follow-up console), Microsoft finds itself in an interesting situation with Xbox.

Due largely to the medium's chronology, the community of mature gamers (read: mid-20s and older) is rapid increasing. With the right hardware, software, and marketing decisions, this group could easily—and should easily—become Microsoft's core audience. It seems obvious; make Xbox a gaming console for adults and don't be shy about it. Of course, important distinctions must be made here. Mature does not imply bloody. Mature does not imply the repeated use of words that rhyme with "puck" and "gashole." Mature does not imply sexy ladies in things playing beach sports. While it can, of course, mean all these things—in an older market, kid-friendly censor limitations needn't exist—the key is a certain sensibility, a certain sophistication, and a certain grace that caters to brains that have been functioning for two dozen years rather than 10.

Now, make it happen, Billy G.

✎ Evan Sharmoon is Editor-in-Chief of Xbox Nation.



BANZAI!

THE MOH TEAM GOES SOUTH (PACIFIC)

U.S.A.

➔ You can blame Saving Private Ryan for the multitude of WWII-themed games set in the European theater of war. That movie spawned a wave of WWII movies and games, with some great results like Band of Brothers and the Medal of Honor games on PS2 and PC.

The latest installment in the PS2 and PC series—Medal of Honor: Rising Sun and Medal of Honor: Pacific Assault, respectively—will put you in the hellish

island-to-island fighting of the Pacific theater. Playing as Marine Corporal Joseph Griffin, your tour of duty begins during the attack on Pearl Harbor and continues through such infamous flash points as Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, and the bridge on the River Kwai. You'll even lurk through the streets of Shanghai in the guise of an OSS agent as you search for your POW brother as part of a story arc that will encompass future MOH games.

Both games should play similarly to their predecessors, which means solid first-person shooter action over varied environments and battle situations with great computer-controlled enemies. The addition of cooperative play adds a new twist, allowing you to play through the campaign with a buddy. Medal of Honor: Pacific Assault for PS2 and Medal of Honor: Rising Sun for PC, Xbox, and GameCube will be out this fall. ☞

ROOKIES OF THE YEAR

IGF AWARDS PICK FRESH TALENT FOR 2003

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE

➔ Not everyone is working on the next Doom, Deus Ex, or Grand Theft Auto—but they will one day. That's the whole point behind the annual Independent Games Festival, recognizing talented designers who haven't yet broken into the big time. Held during the Game Developer's Conference in San Jose this past March, 10 nominees were on hand to compete for prizes and recognition from peers and some of the industry's top talents.

Judges and conventioners voted for their favorites. Would it be the stock-picking title, Mr. Bigshot, or an MMO game that beat The Sims Online to the market by years (Furcadial)? Courtney Tudor, the stock market junkie behind Mr. Bigshot, says, "It's an honor just to get this far and be nominated."

But no, neither of those games won. What did—Wild Earth by Super X Studios—stood above the competition. The game that takes you to the Serengeti plains as a photojournalist on assignment came away with three big nods from the IGF: The Seamus McNally Grand Prize and awards for Innovation in Game Design and

Innovation in Visual Art. Lead Designer James Thrush won \$17,000 for his work (which took about five months and \$5,000 to create).

As the hopefuls assembled for the top honors, another group of up-and-comers were showing off projects in the Student Showcase. There was the Tron lightcycle-like Vektor Space designed by a group of seniors from DigiPen (the Bellevue, Washington based game-design college), and Break'n' Battle had us pop-lockin' like Turbo and Ozon. Shawn Fenton, lead programmer at The Game Club at Cogswell Polytechnical College was quick to point out the potential opportunities. "[Our last project manager] worked on a game with us called Propane. After seeing his work, EA hired him. Now he'll be working on the next James Bond game," Fenton says.

What's next for Wild Earth developer Thrush? When he isn't teaching game-design classes and 3D programming at the local university, he plans to continue work on his game and have it ready for a Christmas launch. In fact, he's hoping to turn the title into a franchise. ☞

—Darren Gladstone



→ Vektor Space



→ Wild Earth



RISE UP

against gravity.

NBA 2

We, the airborne, refuse to be held down by the oppressive laws of physics any longer. We defy the forces of nature. We will be earthbound no more. Gravity is no match for our righteous hops. Everyday, our tanks grow by leaps and bounds. We are towering titans above the rim. And in the stratosphere, our soles are free.

GAMEPLANNER

APRIL 2003

WHAT'S UP WITH WHAT'S GOIN' DOWN THIS MONTH

01

After a few short delays, Capcom finally releases *Super Puzzle Fighter 2* for GBA. Buy a link cable if you don't want to share your GBA with your no-good friends.



02

The piratey *Sea Dogs II* (PC), the very late *Red Faction 2* (GC, Xbox), and the slammin' *Def Jam Vendetta* (GC, PS2).



04

If you're lucky enough to be near a theater that's showing it (San Francisco, Chicago, New York City), go see the Cowboy Bebop movie: *Knockin' On Heaven's Door*.

05

06

Today is Uprising Day in Sudan. It's good that they're organized and everything, but it does take away the element of surprise.

07

In his 49 years on this planet, Jackie Chan has appeared in 114 films. Half of them with a mismatched partner. Usually Chris Tucker.

08

Go get *Hamtaro* for GBA. It's a game about hamsters.

09

Play ball with *Backyard Baseball* for GC, kick it old school with *FF Origins* on the PSone, save the world with *Splitter Cell* (PS2), and go online with *Midnight Club II*.



10

Broadcasting legend John Madden turns 67 today. Now you see, when it's your birthday, you have the cake there and you're supposed to eat the cake with a fork..



12

It's National Redemption Day in Liberia. You know somebody messed up pretty bad when the entire country has to make amends.



14

Buffy starlet and better half of Freddie Prinze Jr., Sarah Michelle Gellar turns 26 today, but that still probably won't stop her from appearing in teen movies.

15

The road to becoming a Jedi begins here: the massively-multiplayer online *Star Wars Galaxies*. Also look for *Golden Sun 2* and *Jet Grind Radio* for GBA.



16

Ninja Five-O and *Yu-Gi-Oh World for GBA*, *1080*, *High Heat 2K4* and *Ikaruga* for GC, *Godzilla* for Xbox, *Bomberman Collection* for PC, and *X2 Wolverine* for all systems.



17

It's Evacuation Day in Syria, so if you notice that all your neighbors are gone and their windows are boarded up, then that's probably why.

18

Did you like *Spinal Tap*, *Best in Show*, or *Waiting for Guffman*? Then you'll probably love *A Mighty Wind*, a new mockumentary by the same brilliantly funny minds.



19

20

It's Easter Sunday, and once again you have to make the most important decision of your life: Cadbury's or Reese's Peanut Butter

21

Lust for Life indeed. Iggy Pop turns 56.



22

What are the chances of classic rocker Peter Frampton celebrating his 53rd birthday by playing a little *Phantasy Star Online* for Xbox? None at all.



23

Art imitates life? *Conflict: Desert Storm* is released for GC, along with *Colin McRae Rally 3* (PS2) and *Lulu: The Ruins of Lore* (GBA).

24

25

The current king of arcade basketball, *NBA Street Vol. 2* is released for PS2 and GameCube. Hit the streets and show the world you've got mad game, yo.



28

New Hampshire celebrates Fast Day. So...what? 23 hours? You can drive 70 instead of 65? Nobody gets to eat? Seriously, we don't understand.

29

NBA Street Vol. 2 and *Rent a Hero No. 1* for Xbox both arrive in stores. We have to question the wisdom of having the word "rent" in the title of your game

30

It's May Day Eve in Switzerland, when all the Swiss children gather around the May Day Tree and sing May Day carols. Maybe Father May Day will bring them *Choplifter* for PS2?

Viva la dunk.

The time is now, people. No longer can we be content just to rack up points.
The court is our centerstage, and we must perform. Now is our chance
to shine. We must seize the spotlight. Demonstrate and dominate.
With moves and method. We must prove to the world that
we are ready for primetime.



'MOTO GRAND PRIX

THE PIED PIPER OF GEEKS AND DWEEBS INVADES LONDON

● JAPAN

➔ Singers sign CDs and authors sign books all the time, but developers rarely sign games. So, when Shigeru Miyamoto held his first-ever public signing session in London to promote *Zelda: The Wind Waker*, over 1,000 gamers flocked to Virgin Megastore (some lining up 24 hours in advance) for a rare chance to meet Mario's daddy. Clutching everything from NES *Super Mario Bros.* to Platinum GameCubes, the incredible turnout stunned Virgin by exceeding the number of people who came the previous day for Britney Spears' autograph session. Of course, Miyamoto didn't fly to London just to strain his wrist—he also revealed that Kirby's *Air Ride* (once an N64 launch title before cancellation) and *Pikmin 2* (complete with multiplayer) were on the way to GameCube. **A**



➔ A mass of slightly paunchy, slightly pale, possibly intoxicated Britons sweetly cram into the Virgin Megastore on Oxford Street for a chance to let the godfather of videogames scribble on their wares. Below, Miyamoto-san can be seen humming "The Rainbow Connection" to himself. God bless 'im.



IMPORT SPOTLIGHT

VENUS & BRAVES (PS2)

➔ If you enjoy RPGs like *Ogre Battle*, *Suikoden*, and *Persona*, chances are you'd enjoy Namco's newest RPG, *Venus & Braves*. Developed by the same team as one of Namco's other RPGs you've never heard of (*Seven*), *Venus & Braves* combines a beautiful *Where the Wild Things Are* painted look with a battle system that strategy-RPG fans would eat up. Depending on the attacking character's class, the abilities of those surrounding him can enhance his skills or defensive traits. Although *Venus & Braves* is a single-player game, it offers the unique bonus of supporting online battles where you face off against a live opponent's team. With over 50 units available, *Venus & Braves* should offer some unique encounters. Naturally, the experts at Namco HomeTek (the U.S. division) have no plans to bring this stellar title to the States. Weak. **A-**



INTERNATIONAL REPORT

Take to the streets.



A revolution is sweeping the streets, changing the game forever.
So throw off your tired tricks. Your played moves. The limits are gone.
It's all about freedom now. The freedom of possibilities. Of opportunity.
The freedom to control your own future. The freedom to play your
game, your way. The revolution is here. Viva la revolution.

FINAL FLIGHT

OLD FRIEND R-TYPE TAKES TO THE AIR ONE LAST TIME

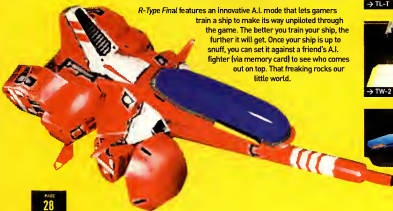
JAPAN

➔ In a surprise announcement that brought both tears of joy and sadness to our eyes, Irem revealed it would release its first new *R-Type* game in four years. The game, dubbed *R-Type Final*, would, as the name indicates, also be the last game in the series. Citing a lack of interest (and sales) in old-school shooters, the series' producer said although *R-Type Delta* (PS) would have been the final episode, he persuaded

Irem's board of directors to let him make one last game. In what could be the greatest side-scrolling shooter ever, *R-Type Final* will offer gamers over 50 customizable ships (colors, parts, bits, etc.) to choose from, including lesser-known ships from obscure Irem games like *Mr. Hell* (arcade, 1987). Developed internally by Irem for PS2, this is the No.1 import on our wish list for 2003. *R-Type Final* will be released in Japan this June. 14



R-Type Final features an innovative A.I. mode that lets gamers train a ship to make its way unopposed through the game. The better you train your ship, the further it will get. Once your ship is up to snuff, you can set it against a friend's A.I. fighter (via memory card) to see who comes out on top. That freaking rocks our little world.



INCOMING

SPACE CHANNEL 5 PART 2 (PS2)



➔ If you were a Dreamcast owner who bemoaned the fact that Sega never brought over *Space Channel 5 Part 2*, bemoan no more. While the DC version will never make it Stateside, GMR can confirm that not only will the PS2 version of United Game Artist's rhythm-dance-shooter come to the States later this year, but we can also reveal it will come packed in a two-DVD set with UGA's PS2 remake of the first *SC5*. The interesting thing is Sega is not publishing it themselves. Who's publishing? We would tell you, but we'd have to kill you.

In other news, a bird on a wire landed on our shoulder this morning and told us that Bandai's GameCube title *Chibi Robo* ("chibi" means small) will arrive in the United States later this year, and Banpresto's *Lupin* the 3rd PS2 game is also en route. 14



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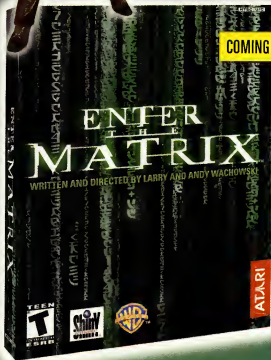
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NEXT



INCOMING GAMES PREVIEWED



PREVIEWED THIS ISSUE:

DEUS EX 2: THE INVISIBLE WAR	PC/XB	P.32
RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN	PS2/XB	P.34
WILL ROCK	PC	P.36
WARD WORLD	GC	P.36
GALLOP RACER 2003	PS2	P.36
COLOR QUEST	PS2	P.37
TOTAL WAR: VIKING INVASION	PC	P.37
RTX RED ROCK	PS2	P.37
LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS	PC/PS2	P.38
HARPOON 4	PC	P.38
WARDRAFT III: THE FROZEN THRONE	PC	P.38
DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS HEROES	GC/PS2/XB	P.39
ARMORED CORE 3: SILENT LINE	PS2	P.39
PITFALL HARRY	GBA/GC/PS2/XB	P.39
CHAOS LEGION	PS2/XB	P.40
BACKYARD WRESTLING	PS2	P.40
RED DEAD REVOLVER	PS2	P.40
BLACK 9	GBA	P.41
BOKTAI	XB	P.41
VIRTUAL ON MARZ	PS2	P.41

RELEASE | OCTOBER

DEUS EX 2: INVISIBLE WAR

BY STEVE COHEN | ILLUSTRATION BY EIDOS INTERACTIVE | DEVELOPER ION STORM STUDIOS

EX MARKS THE SPOT FOR ION STORM'S NEW MASTERWORK

Kiss the Windy City goodbye: Before *Deus Ex 2* even begins, Chicago gets wasted in a terrorist attack. For this *Invisible War*, the bad guys have pulled out the big guns—or, actually, the really small guns. Yes, for this *Invisible War*, they're using an invisible and insidious weapon: the cells of human bodies.

The sequel to the much-heralded PC and PS2 first-person shooter *Deus Ex: The Conspiracy*, *Deus Ex 2: Invisible War* takes place in roughly the year 2030, more or less 15 years after the original game. Players jump into the role of agent Alex D (male or female, you choose) and are jetted off to such faraway locales as Antarctica, Egypt, and Germany.

While the game's plot remains a closely guarded secret, its appeal is self-evident. Part shooter and part RPG, *DX2* lets players build their own hero and, for the most part, choose their own path. "We want to empower players," Director Warren Spector says. "We want them to create the experience while we get out of the way." Alex D can be customized with special modification chips and tailored to a player's style. It'll be possible to turn Alex into a muscular brute who can kill foes

by throwing crates at them, a stealthy spy-type, a computer whiz, an energy vampire who gets health off corpses, and just about anything in between.

Spector and his development team intend to make every light in *DX2* dynamic—not only because it's cool, but also because of the potential impact on gameplay. "For the first time, players will be able to create their own shadows to hide in," Spector says. Put another way, players can knock out the power supply, and then skulk about in a dimly lit wonderland.

Each *DX2* mission will feature multiple solutions, branching paths, and plenty of text-tree-based dialogue. Players, Spector says, will be able to complete the game without ever touching a weapon. The more bloodthirsty need not fear, as they will find ample opportunities to kill, such as shooting barrels full of toxic gas, creating an asphyxiating zone of death, or taking control of military robots and wasting foes with extreme prejudice. **E**

GMA SAYS → War is hell, but if Ion Storm comes through, this'll be one war worth fighting.

→ **HOW HOT...** 🔥 🔥 🔥 🔥 🔥



→ Dome arigato, killer roboto



→ Temple of Gloom



→ Baby Huey takes off

→ Here's a Fun Fact: Ion Storm has hinted that Alex D may actually be a clone of J.C. Denton, the protagonist from the first *Deus Ex* game. (There's no word how the company will explain it if she's female.)

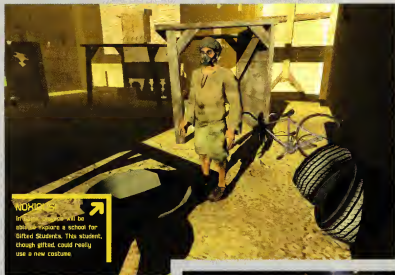
→ Below: These religious hipsters don snazzy leather suits and "sexier than thou" cowls.



IN MOTION.

→ Though still early in its development, *Deus Ex 2* looks decidedly solid. Director Warren Spector and company showed off the game's new rag-doll physics, demonstrating how characters react to being shot. Freshly killed foes will crumple and fold realistically, showing players the consequences of their actions; says Spector: "It looks human enough that you'll recoil." **E**





WORKAROUND
If you're stuck on an enemy, acquire a sword for Gifted Students. This student, though gifted, could really use a new costume.



→ Do not pass Go



→ Here, kitty, kitty!



→ Just call him Hardhat Harry

→ Welcome to Antarctica, where it's colder than a Swede's refrigerator and these burly, gun-toting guards are waiting to greet you with hot, leaded death. Read in peace!



→ "Uh, do you think God will let me raise my cow?"

ROCK AND ROLL!

➔ Eidos and Ion Storm Studios have enlisted a "hip, industrial, independent band," to create original music for *Deus Ex 2*. This band's efforts can be seen throughout the game at special holographic stands featuring completely futuristic (and totally fictional) pop singer NG Resonance. Resonance will shake her virtual booty and sing songs, but only if the right fee is paid. For the record, the band's true identity has yet to be revealed. ☹



MY ROBOT, MY FRIEND

➔ One of *Deus Ex 2*'s neatest new modifications enables players to take control of the game's various droids. Once hero Alex D takes control of a robot, his (or her) body will be left undefended, leaving players a 10-second period in which to safely hide Alex away. This modification has all sorts of nifty and nasty applications: Imagine taking control of a janitorial robot, entering a room and eavesdropping on an important conversation, leaving said room, and then returning as a military droid to deal out some leaded justice. ☹



RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

CONSOLE: XBOX/PS2 CHAIRMAN: ACTIVISION DEVELOPER: NERVE SOFTWARE/RASTER PRODUCTIONS

AS IF HATING REGULAR NAZIS WASN'T ENOUGH

➔ The Third Reich is at it again. Those goosestepping, genocidal maniacs are working on some truly bizarre experiments involving super-soldiers, genetic mutations, and reanimation of the undead. All in a day's work for the greatest videogame villains ever.

Essentially enhanced ports of the PC version, Xbox and PS2 versions of *RTCW* follow the same story line as the original: Famed OSA soldier B.J. Blazkowicz takes on the mad scientist Heinrich Himmler and all his cretinous creations. But the differences between the console versions are pretty significant. The Xbox version, entitled

Tides of War, features online play via Xbox Live: You can play cooperatively with a friend through Story mode, or pick a character class and jump on a team for some good ol' fashioned deathmatch. Teams consist of up to eight players, and battle ensues on maps tailored for team play. Of course, all of your favorite Xbox Live features like voice chat and buddy lists are supported. [See our interview on the next page for more details.]

And what of PS2's *Operation Resurrection*? Well, it includes approximately none of the above features. Since different studios are handling the different ports [Raster Productions is

crafting the PS2 build, Nerve Software's on Xbox], we're going to predict that the game will look noticeably better on Microsoft's machine. There are sure to be some PS2-exclusive features, but as it stands now, we'll stray towards the online play, thank you very much. **1***

GMA SAYS → We're always up for coop play. We also hate Nazis. Makes a good deathmatch.

➔ **HOW HOT...**



EN FUEGO

A little less "soldier," a little more "standing in front of the fire." Blazkowicz is a man of fire.

TALK

GMR took some time to chat about *Tides of War* with Marty Stratton of Id Software and Brandon James of Nerve Software.

➔ **GMR:** Let's start with an overview of what's new...

MS: Basically, the big picture is: You are B.J. Blazkowicz, an Army Ranger recruited into the OSA. This is actually where the console version begins. We've added a very, very large prologue to what was the PC version; that's essentially the very beginning of the story. The whole prologue level puts you on the trail of this woman who is the head of the SS paranormal division, a part of Heinrich Himmler's division that's trying to twist the occult, science, and genetic mutation into a new army that can turn the tide of the war. You get on her trail, track her to Germany with Agent One, and end up crash landing in Germany near Castle Wolfenstein, where you're captured and taken to the castle. You must then escape and basically start gathering information and intelligence on what's happening. The OSA has sent you in because it knows something odd is going on, and it has a basic understanding of the characters involved, but you're being sent in to understand what's going on and get more information.

GMR: Does the rest of the story follow the PC version?

MS: The PC version is very solid in its own right, but for the console versions, we thought it'd be nice to build up the characters a little more, to give you more background on the story about B.J. and Agent One. If you remember from the PC version, the first thing you see is Agent One being tortured and killed. You see him lying dead on the table, but there wasn't much emotion tied to what was essentially your partner being murdered. So now, there are seven missions that take place in Egypt, where you're interacting and fighting alongside Agent One and he helps you in a number of different areas. You really get a sense of who he was, who you are, and why you're being recruited. It makes it more fun on the Xbox because you have the opportunity to then play as Agent One and as B.J. through Cooperative mode.

GMR: What kind of teamwork is involved in the Co-op mode?

BJ: It's basically two players fighting together. There are instances where the levels are not linear—where it would be advantageous to have one of the guys go forward and clear out an area and have the other guy hang back and do something else. There's also a

great stealth mission about halfway through the game where there are five generals you have to assassinate in a village. You can stay together and sneak through the town, but if you want to get through it quickly, you can break apart and have one guy go sneaking off through the wine cellars and pop off a few of the generals while the other guy stays back at the beginning to clear out the rest of the bad guys.

GMR: Aside from the cooperative play, have you made any other technical improvements or additions?

MS: From a graphics perspective, it looks unbelievable. There's a whole new treatment for the water and a lot of new graphical effects. There's now a shotgun, which is incredibly cool, and some new items Brandon mentioned: a holy cross that evaporates the undead with holy light, an EMP device that sends out a shockwave, and an energy shield you use against attacks. There's a lot of new effects associated with those. We also went in and redid all of the sounds to make them a little more realistic and to give the game a different feel.

There have been some big steps, when you consider the seven prologue levels, and the new items, weapons, and enemies. As much as we stay true to the original core of the game, the story of the game, and the feel of the game, it's made big steps as far as additional content goes.

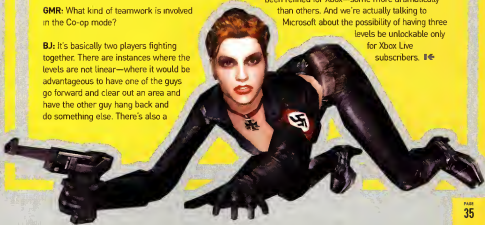
GMR: Are the multiplayer maps entirely new?

BJ: In a sense, yes. They've been tweaked for eight players; some doorways have been made bigger just to complement the controller better and to move around the levels better. We've also clipped off some walls—stuff that makes moving around the levels easier.

MS: There are also some totally new levels. We have 16 total levels; three of them are brand new. The other 13 are derivative of the original PC multiplayer maps in one form or another. Like Brandon said, they've all been refined for Xbox—some more dramatically than others. And we're actually talking to Microsoft about the possibility of having three levels be unlockable only for Xbox Live subscribers. ☞



→ There are four classes of characters in the multiplayer game, each with their own special abilities: soldier, engineer, medic, and lieutenant. The soldier is the balanced fighter, the engineer can fix mounted machine gun and plant dynamite, the medic is the obvious healer, and the lieutenant can call in for different types of air strikes in outdoor areas. Deathmatch fans, turn away: all multiplayer modes are based on teams.



X8

PS2

RELEASE | APRIL

WILL ROCK

DEV: STEIN PC PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT DEV: SAGER INTERACTIVE

PROBABLY WON'T...

➔ There's nothing like a copy to make you appreciate the original even more. After playing a good portion of *Will Rock*, the upcoming first-person shoot-em-up from developer Saber Interactive, we realized how much more we like *Serious Sam* than we thought (on PC, mind you).

Everything about *Will Rock* evokes *Serious Sam*: the tough, rude main character; the huge, open spaces full of swarms of enemies; the "historical" ancient settings; the shooting, shooting, shooting; and more shooting; even the little sparkly effects around all the ammo and health pick-ups. It's so much like *Serious Sam*, if it's not an homage, Ubi Soft better have some decent lawyers.

Once again, a copy only makes

the original look better, particularly since copies are usually flawed versions of the original. And *Will Rock* is definitely flawed. Keep in mind, this is a preview, not a review, but the hours we spent with *Will Rock* suggest a game that's seriously lacking Sam's flair; what the French call, *je n'ais pas ça*, "a certain I don't know what." The endless slogging through waves and waves of baddies gets old fast, as it did in *Sam*. What saved that game was its humor, and *Will Rock* has some, too. After being attacked by about two dozen tigers, *Will* remarks: "That's a lot of pussy." Yup, that's witty all right. At least the game runs smoothly, and maintains really good framerate. **B+**

GMA SAYS → Again, this clone war has

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥



RELEASE | MAY

WARIO WORLD

DEV: STEIN DC PUBLISHER: NINTENDO DEV: TREASURE

WITH HIS MIND ON HIS MONEY AND HIS MONEY ON HIS MIND

➔ Greed is good, and if anyone knows this principle intimately, it's the evil, fat version of Mario, aka Wario. He's dominated the Game Boy circuit for nine years now, but aside from a few token appearances in those goofy two-shoes Mario games, Wario has never had a starring role on a console title. But his drive for the spotlight has never died, and now, the mustachioed malcontent finally jumps to Nintendo's main stage. Previous Wario games were the responsibility of the more-than-capable R&D1 wing of Nintendo, but this one is in the hands of fan-favorite developer Treasure (*Gunsler Heroes*, *Silhouette Mirage*, *Stretch Panic*), under the

watchful eye of Nintendo HQ.

So, is Treasure trying to reproduce faithfully the traditional platforming feel of the GBA series, or is it doing its own thing for the jump to 3D? The recent moves and information officially released by Nintendo make it hard to say for certain. The smash-em-up combat, coin collecting, and unique platforming seem to be intact, but notably absent are Wario's trademark transformations and special abilities. Expect more definitive answers soon, as the scheduled May release date fast approaches. **B+**

GMA SAYS → Treasure has got to fully master the whole 3D thing. This may be the catalyst.

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥



READ MY SHORTS!

GALLOP RACER 2003

RELEASE | MARCH

While it may not have captured the gaming zeitgeist in the same way a game like, say, *Gran Turismo 3* did, *Gallop Racer 2003* still scored a direct hit with its own niche market. Treasures figured it was about time to unleash the next installment of the definitive horse-racing simulation. Can you say "gallop?" **C** (PS2)



RELEASE | MAY

COLOR QUEST

□ SYSTEM: PS2 □ PUBLISHER: AGETEC □ DEVELOPER: TAITO

IT'S SCARYOLA TIME, BOYEEEEEE!

➔ Don't let the primary colors fool you: *Color Quest* may be one of the coolest titles you'll play all year. The game can be likened to *Pokémon* as you walk around a village [although *Color Quest* happens to be in 3D], while getting into battles with other villagers using your stockade of rainbow-tinted creatures. *Color Quest* distances itself from Nintendo's franchise by allowing you to create your own monsters using a simple yet innovative brush and paint interface.

At the game's start, you have a limited amount of paint available to draw a simple shape. The game's unique creature-creation engine [developed by Tokyo University] then transforms your 2D sketch into a fully animated 3D critter. By taking this sketching [new word, we made it up] into

battle, you gain experience in the form of extra colors and paint quantities. Different colors boost different attributes [red, for example, raises a creature's attack level, while green raises HP], and by using specific colors to draw additional parts, gamers can customize their monsters' strengths and abilities. It's great to watch your initially simple creature evolve into a significantly more complex monster. While the game's presentation might skew a little young, *Color Quest* is a game nearly anyone can enjoy. If you're a fan of moves like *Princess Mononoke* or *Spirited Away*, you'll find the game's style instantly familiar. **B+**

GMA SAYS → All that time we spent doodling in school is finally paying off. Oh, sweat, irony!

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥🔥🔥



RELEASE | MAY

TOTAL WAR: VIKING INVASION

□ SYSTEM: PC □ PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION □ DEVELOPER: BIG MOUTH GAMES

FROM THE LAND OF THE ICE AND SNOW...

➔ The *Total War* series' first installment, *Shogun*, was a massive-in-scope strategy game [both real-time and turn-based] set in feudal Japan that pitted literally thousands of units against each other in realistic combat. 2002's *Medieval*, *Total War* added siege engines and a larger unit-capacity, among other improvements, and was a huge critical success. The latest add-on expansion pack from Creative Assembly turns its historically accurate eye from the Crusades northward to the mobs of pillaging Vikings that poured forth from Scandinavia to terrorize Britain.

Total War: Viking Invasion builds on the great gameplay already in *Medieval*, but of course, it wouldn't be a decent expansion pack without a few upgrades. One new feature is an improved prebattle setup

screen that allows players to scout out positions before engaging the enemy, and to plan for reinforcements ahead of time. This kind of intelligence is available to real-time field commanders, so why not you, too?

The Vikings aren't the only new fighting faction to take the field in *Viking Invasion*. Since the focus is on both where and who the Vikings fought, you'll see Saxon, Scot, Irish, Welsh, and Pict factions. Expect new units like Viking Berserkers and Saxon Huscarles; new weapons include the organ gun, boiling oil, and flaming arrows [shot from inside castle walls]. In addition to classic *Total War* gameplay, there's a lot of new stuff here for fans to enjoy. **B+**

GMA SAYS → Very steep! That's where I'm a Viking.

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥🔥🔥



READ MY SHORTS!

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥🔥🔥

RTX RED ROCK

RELEASE | MAY

■ It's from LucasArts, it takes place on a different planet, and it involves subterranean robots. Hey, you with the lightsaber—not so fast. This anti-Star Wars *RTX Red Rock* is a 3D action game set on the colonized planet of Mars, so here E.Z. Wheeler (aka *Red*), not your cyborgmatic arm controls your control and your cyborgmatic eye boosts four different scan modes. **(PS2)**



RELEASE | MAY

LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: ADD

DEVELOPER: CIGAMES PUBLISHER: EIDOS STORYBOARDER: CORE

TOMB LITTLE, TOMB LATE?

➔ Even when you're part-time globetrotting adventurer and full-time digital wet dream (and now wrongfully accused fugitive) Lara Croft, looks aren't everything. And from what we've seen, this beauty no longer has brains or brawn enough to keep our attention.

The good? Levels look quite nice, if not as exotic as we'd expect. Gone are the angular environs of past games; players now guide Ms. Croft through impressively organic and meticulously crafted streets and sewers that are more *Silent Hill* than Solomon's Tomb.

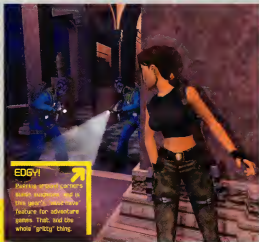
That's right, according to our hands-on playtime with Lara's latest adventure, the action takes place solely in the decidedly unswashbuckling streets and sewers of Paris and Prague, and that's not the least of our concerns. Call us romantic, but we liked Lara better when we were guiding her through musty catacombs, not sneaking up and snapping the necks of hapless security guards in the Louvre.

Unfortunately, putting Lara's strings still feels remarkably antiquated, and painfully reminiscent of previous installments. While the levels are no longer tile-based, making your way through and across them sure is. Control is still of the clumsy point-and-shoot style, making such tasks as performing a U-turn or lining up with a scalable pipe or ladder an exercise in frustration. Branching paths in both conversation (ask nicely, or cut right to the point) and interaction (barge, kick, or simply open the door) have been integrated into the gameplay, but frankly, we have no idea why.

Don't forget, however, that what we sampled was a still incomplete build, which would well explain why Lara was toting invisible pistols, striding unimpeded through laser fences, and throttling motionless guards. Even the streets of Europe were empty as, well, tombs, and quiet as mice.

Eidos insists that Core Design has a habit of suddenly pulling it all together at the last minute. Well, the clock's ticking, guys. ☹

GMA SAYS ➔ Gamers are a fickle bunch. Could time (and patience) be running short for the legendary Lara Croft?

➔ **HOW HOT...**

EDGEVI

Point-and-shoot games aren't dead, but it's this year's "dead zone" feature for adventure games. That, and the whole "gritty" thing.



RELEASE | MAY

HARPOON 4

DEVELOPER: PC PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT DEVELOPER: ULTIMATION

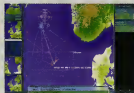
HELLO, SAILOR!

➔ Old-school PC gamers (seriously old-school—like, 128K of RAM in your Tandy old-school), all the way back to pen-and-paper gaming dinosaurs, know well Larry Bond's hardcore naval warfare simulations. Released in 1989, *Harpoon* let armchair strategists and Tom Clancy fans fulfill their lust for accurately simulated naval battles set in the modern era of long range missiles, nuclear submarines, fighter aircraft, and other tools of "over-the-horizon" fighting practiced by the superpowers throughout the 1980s and '90s. Ah, the Cold War. How ironic that nowadays, nostalgia for it warms our heart.

The latest iteration, *Harpoon 4*, comes some five years after the last, courtesy

of Ubi Soft, the lone major publisher dedicated to producing realistic military simulations. In development by Ultimatum (the people behind *Silent Hunter III*), *Harpoon 4* puts you in the admiral's chair, where you control battle groups of the latest and most advanced naval craft from multiple nations of NATO and erstwhile members of the Warsaw Pact. More than a thousand ships, subs, aircraft, and ground units will be represented, and you'll be able to go up against your buddy in head-to-head multiplayer. Just try not to start WWII, all right? ☹

GMA SAYS ➔ Crisply rendered admirals are likely to be releasing fastest in their pants' right about now.

➔ **HOW HOT...**

READ MY SHORTS!

RELEASE | SEPTEMBER

WARCRAFT III: TFT

■ It may be heresy to say, but last year's *WarCraft III* left us a bit cold. Fortunately, Blizzard is known for its great expansion packs, so we're warming up a bit to *The Frozen Throne*. The exciting new single-player mission set is nearly as big as the original's and wraps up loose plot ends, also look for new heroes, two new units per race, a new campaign editor, and more multiplayer maps. (PC)

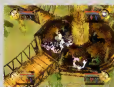
➔ **HOW HOT...**

INCOMING GAMES

old heroes → armored core 3 silent line → pitfall harry



→ From our playtime with Heroes, Infogrames' latest licensee looks promising—frankly, there simply aren't enough solid four-player, one-screen games. Of course, even if you don't have pals to call on, you can expect to start the game with your powers partially pumped up. You are a hero, after all...



RELEASE | JUNE

D&D HEROES

Developer: GPC2000X Publisher: INFOGRAVES
Console: PS2 PC XBOX

SO YOU THINK YOU'RE A HERO?

Not that we would know, but from what we hear, the best thing about playing *Dungeons & Dragons* back in the day was finding camaraderie (or at least a little solace) in one's fellow dorks, geeks, losers, and nerds. That, and the dice.

Our voices have changed, but our need for companionship has not. Which is where Infogrames comes in, fiercely brandishing the multiplatform *Dungeons & Dragons Heroes*, set for a fall release on each of the big three consoles. With *Heroes*, Infogrames has set out to make two games: an epic RPG that adheres closely to the official D&D universe, and an epic actioner that—like the p&g game [that's pencils & paper!—is far more fun with four.

The game kicks off with the requisite RPG fanfare: A great evil, suppressed long ago by a band of four heroes, has risen again, and it's up to the recently resurrected player and friends to find the Planar Gems and bring peace to the land. Along the way, expect to do battle with all sorts of nastiness straight out of the *Monster Manual*—although Infogrames is clearly excited about the opportunity to flaunt some new beasts, such as the Rage Golem.

Character classes are limited to Fighter, Wizard, Cleric, and Rogue, although parties can be mixed and matched. While there are plenty of stats, skills, and items to tinker with, a user-friendly combat engine enables spells to be mapped to different buttons without opening the Options screen, keeping the emphasis squarely on the action. ▶▶

GMA SAYS → Well, someone's got to pick up the slack where the *Quest* series left off.

→ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥

RELEASE | JULY

ARMORED CORE 3: SL

Developer: PS2 Publisher: AGETEC Console: FROM

ROBOTS KICKING ROBOT ASS. LOUDLY

We're not kidding when we say there can never be enough big-robot games. Thankfully, Agetec is going out of its way to make sure we receive our daily dose in the form of *Armored Core 3: Silent Line*.

If you've yet to immerse yourself in the AC universe, the series centers around the exploits of a group of heavily armed and armored mercenaries called Ravens. These Ravens sell their services to individuals who entrust them with

dangerous missions. *Silent Line* takes the highly customizable mechs of the AC series and tweaks the action by increasing mech-speed. Gamers can now target specific parts of their enemies, adding a dose of strategy to by missiles? Target your enemy's missile launcher).

Silent Line also adds a first-person cockpit view, putting the gamer squarely in the driver's seat. *Armored Core 3* owners will be happy to know that their built-up 'bots from AC3 will transfer seamlessly to *Silent Line*. Time to dust off those mechs! ▶▶

GMA SAYS → More features, more robots, more customization. Bring it on.

→ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥

READ MY SHORTS:

PITFALL HARRY

■ This fall, take a swing down memory lane with the succumbingly named Pitfall Harry. The titular hero explores 3D levels alternating between free-roaming adventures and action-based linear paths. Harry has a multitude of tools and "heroic" maneuvers at his disposal, and happens upon all the series' trademark icons: crocodiles, scorpions, vanishing pits, and, of course, vines. Swing! (GMA/DC/PS2/N64)

RELEASE | FALL



RELEASE | SUMMER



RELEASE | SUMMER

BACKYARD WRESTLING

DEVELOPER PS2/BOX | PUBLISHER EIDOS INTERACTIVE | DEVELOPER PARADOX

FRONTYARD F...K-UPS

➔ One guy picks up another guy and dumps him, headfirst, into a trash can, while strippers, porn "stars," and other muscle-bound morons cheer him on. When the dumpee emerges, his head is wet with blood. Turns out the can is full of neon lightbulbs. Like, cool! Now that's entertainment. Or rather, that's *Backyard Wrestling*, the underground VHS phenomenon that combines wrestling, Jackass, and *Ultimate Fighting Championship* with videogamelike disregard for injury.

Which makes this "sport" perfect for Paradox—a development team more famous for a game that was never published than for games that were. *Thrill Kill* featured gruesome fatalities and lots of boobs and ran afoul of the censors at EA, who had recently acquired the game from

Virgin Interactive (which was, in its day, more rock star than Rockstar will ever be). Now, Paradox is getting another crack at it, courtesy of Ms. Croft's Eidos Interactive.

Backyard Wrestling is perfect for these guys, and the game is, incredibly, far more tame than the real thing. Run around in one of a number of backyard arenas, beating the living crap out of your trailer-park opponents with every available object. Climb up the scenery and jump on your rival, and then check out the honeys chilling in the hot tub. It's all very bloody, very silly, and somehow, we suspect, quite fun. Until someone gets hurt, that is... **B+**

GMA SAYS → Lower your IQ about 50 points and start clutzing away. Trust us, you'll have fun. But for how long? **W**ell see.

➔ HOW HOT... **🔥🔥🔥**

CHAOS LEGION

DEVELOPER PS2 | PUBLISHER CAPCOM | DEVELOPER CAPCOM

AN APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION

➔ Let it be known that an awesome new beat-em-up lies just over the horizon. It's called *Chaos Legion*, and it takes the stylishness of *Devil May Cry* and blends it with bits of *Crimson Sea*, the puree of which ends up tasting better than its individual ingredients.

Players take the role of Sieg Wahrheit, a swordsman who commands computer-controlled allies called Legions. These Legions come in all shapes and sizes (archer, bomber, shield, sword, power, claw, and giant legion) and accompany Sieg through a dozen-plus levels of mass destruction. As Sieg uses these Legions in battle, they gain experience. And as they gain experience, the damage they inflict,

as well as their actual numbers, increases exponentially. The Legions will attack an enemy of their own accord, but Sieg can also summon them to his side to form a protective barrier, or sic them on any enemy within a certain radius. If you order six fully powered-up swordsmen to attack a single enemy, you'll see just how impressive the swordplay of these allies can be.

Occasionally, you'll be able to play as Sieg's foxy friend, Arco Rinslet, who controls like Dante of *DMC* and has a host of deadly, stylish, pistol-whipper moves. Action-game fans should look forward to this. **B+**

GMA SAYS → Swords? Guns? Bats? Yes. Or we ever get sick of the contraband? No.

➔ HOW HOT... **🔥🔥🔥**

READ MY SHORTS!

➔ HOW HOT... **🔥🔥**

RED DEAD REVOLVER

RELEASE | WINTER

We haven't heard much lately about this Capcom action-shooter, but apparently it's still on track for a 2003 release. As one might expect, from a game set in the Wild West, gunfighting is going to be a significant part of the action. There are also wops, dynamite, unarmed combat, and even horses, though you probably can't use them as weapons. Probably. **(PS2)**



RELEASE | NOVEMBER

BLACK 9

□ WRITER: XBOX □ PUBLISHER: MAJESCO □ DEVELOPER: TALDREN

HAVING YOUR CAKE AND EATING IT... TOO

➔ Kindly allow us introduce you to the most ambitious videogame you've never heard of. An Xbox exclusive, *Black 9* throws *Halo*'s emphasis on action into *Deus Ex*'s dystopian technofuture. This third-person action-adventure RPG has laser guns, vehicles, conspiracies, nanotechnology, robots, and hacking. And let's not forget Xbox Live support for two-player cooperative play through the entire epic story and scenario-based 16-person multiplayer.

Developer Taldren is understandably cagey about revealing story details, but here's what we know. *Black 9* takes place on Earth, the moon, and Mars in the year 2081. Powerful secret societies, the eponymous *Black 9*, control the course of human history.

It's up to you to pit the factions against one another and generally chuck a monkey wrench into the works. How you do it is up to you. Specialize in using any of the 20 planned weapons, including various ballistic and laser guns, crossbows, grenades, and mines. Master jetpacks, hoverbikes, or assault cars—six to eight vehicles are slated in all. Invest your skill points and money in nanotech abilities like a grappling hook (à la *Bionic Commando*), the ability to track foes' DNA trails, or various elemental attacks.

So what isn't in this game? We're willing to bet *Black 9* even has a souped-up robotic kitchen sink—the laser dispensing kind. ☼

GMA SAYS → Ambitious game-benders tend to end up broken or botched. Here's hoping for better.

➔ HOW HOT...



BLACKOUT!
Black 9 certainly sounds good on paper, if a little nebulous while we're praying that we won't be seeing a repeat of *Deus Ex*.

RELEASE | WINTER

BOKTAI

□ WRITER: GBA □ PUBLISHER: KOJIMA OF AMERICA □ DEVELOPER: KCEJ

HERE COMES THE SUN DEE DEE DEE DEE

➔ Trust the creator of heavyweight franchises *Metal Gear Solid* and *Zone of the Enders* to make the most of what technology can offer. The exclusive *Hideo Kojima* has been unusually forthcoming with details about his latest project; here's what we've been able to garner so far...

Boktai is being pegged as a solar action RPG—the GBA cartridge includes a solar sensor and real-time clock, which means enemies, traps, and even the map all change depending on the time of day. Sorry, cave dwellers, but regular lamplight won't work—you've got to get out there and spend some quality time with the sun, which is exactly what Kojima intends.

Players assume the role of Django, a "solar boy" who, armed with his customizable Gun Del Sol, sets out to defeat the

vampire that rules the land, delving into dungeons and confronting the undead (who spill outdoors once the sun has gone down). Cooler yet, bosses can only be destroyed by sunlight, which means Django will have to lock 'em up in a coffin in order to get them outside, and that the player should be wary of tomorrow's weather report.

Solid Snake fans will likely cry themselves to sleep over this decidedly non-tactical espionage adventure, but with Kojima at the helm, we've got faith that the unusual gameplay elements will go much deeper than just another gimmick. ☼

GMA SAYS → We're intrigued by the premise and generally excited to see Kojima and Co produce a game that's not all grit and gunmetal.

➔ HOW HOT...



READ MY SHORTS!

➔ HOW HOT... ◆◆◆◆

VIRTUAL ON MARZ

RELEASE | WINTER

■ A staple of the mech genre since the days of Sega Saturn, Hasegawa's *Virtual-On* has always combined fast action with flashy graphics. The upcoming PS2 iteration, *Virtual-On Marz*, is no exception. Mimicking the now-famous twin-stick setup via the Dual Shock pads and showcasing—again!—the designs of Gundam designer Katoki Hajime, we expect *Marz* to be good stuff. (PS2)





GMA IS TAKING YOU FOR A RIDE. WE LOOK AT OUR FAVORITE RACING GAMES, INCLUDING

FAST AND FURIOUS

IG THE BEST OF WHAT'S OUT NOW AND THE BEST OF WHAT'S TO COME. PUNCH IT!



GENTLEMEN...

START YOUR ENGINES!

GMA PRESENTS ITS REALLY USEFUL GUIDE TO RACING GAMES. BUCKLE UP.

➔ There was a time when the announcement of a new racer set the world alight. Old people would hide behind their doors and nail large pieces of crooked wood against the windows as the country's youth rampaged through the streets on their way to pick up the latest *Sega Rally*, *Daytona*, or *Ridge Racer*. Homework was left undone, dogs left unwalked/unpooped, and smaller pets—typically hamsters—left for dead. There simply wasn't time, you see. Not with that last lap-time to beat, or that unbelievably quick bonus car to unlock. Sorry, Fluffy.

But as the 32-bit era drifted aimlessly into history, the fervor—what Enzo Ferrari (God bless his fuel-injected soul) would describe as *La Passione*—drifted, too...and not the kind of drifting you do on four wheels. Anyone remember much about the first *Ridge Racer* on PS2? Neither do we (though Mielke claims to

have beaten it with his eyes shut while sitting upside down). How about *Sega Rally 2* or *Daytona 2* on Dreamcast? Worthy, yes, but somehow not the marquee events they should have been, and ultimately greeted as you might greet the arrival of a new Honda Civic.

Thankfully, the new god of racing games, Japan's Polyphony Digital, rescued motorheads from despair with the near-perfect *Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec* (but failed to follow it up with a U.S. release of the concept version—see sidebar!). But that was two years ago, and though we're certain to see *GT4* at next month's E3 show in Los Angeles, it may be Christmas before we actually get to drive our Lotus Elise Si into a tree.

The general wisdom is that two factors brought sweeping changes to the racing-game market. First, *Gran Turismo* sort of screwed it up for everyone—in the best possible way, of course, but screwed it up nonetheless. No longer could expertly crafted powersliding coin-op racers count on a comfy retirement on home consoles. Suddenly, the young folks wanted not just tens of cars, but hundreds. And they weren't content with three tracks, either. What the old people had always feared had come true: The youth were demanding Japanese tuning cars and listening to hip-hop, and there was no longer the draft to keep them in check. Not only that, but Dr. Scholl wasn't a real doctor! Hell had, indeed, frozen over, and the kids were doing



➔ *Gran Turismo* and *Daytona USA* are the current champions of their respective genres, and among the most important racing games of all time—the brilliant complexity of the former balances the brilliant simplicity of the latter. And if you don't like those, there's always *Ridge Racer*, *Sega Rally*, *Midnight Club*, *Grand Prix*...



donuts on the ice.

Secondly, and more critical, the coin-op industry was running out of ideas...and cash. You need only look at *Sega's Young Car Champions* (p. 10), *Mr. Mizuguchi* (p. 11), and the uninspired *Scud Race* to see the malaise rife throughout even the most celebrated racing codeshops at the close of the '90s. Attempts to resuscitate the arcade-racing franchise have been feeble at best (Yu Suzuki's *Ferrari* was the bright spot in the last few years; otherwise despair showing), and Namco, its *Ridge Racer* series has taken a back seat to

Gran Turismo, has been especially quiet since trading *Ridge Racer 5* to market in time for the PS2 launch.

In the absence of the big franchises, smaller developers have provided a steady stream of innovative and polished titles on next-generation systems, as well as on the PC. On the rally front, there's Sweden's Digital Illusions, its *Rallioport Challenge* (Xbox, PC) has current champ Codemasters looking in its rearview mirror: Sega has returned to form with *Sega GT* (also on Xbox). And the U.K.'s Criterion Games has scored a direct hit



Days of thunder!

GMA'S SELECTIVE HISTORY OF THE TOP DRIVING GAMES OF ALL TIME (MINUS THE REALLY OLD CRAP ONES)

» OUTRUN (SEGA) 1986



➔ The game that created Ferrari lust in a whole generation of kids. Continuous stages, oncoming traffic, and rolling hills helped Outrun munch quarters at a parent-alerting rate. **B+**

» VIRTUA RACING (SEGA) 1992



➔ Sure, it looks like origami Ferrari, but "back in the day" *Virtua Racing* blew fragile minds away with its fluid animation, realistic physics, and 3D graphics. Another feather in AM2's versatile cap. **B+**

» RIDGE RACER (NAMCO) 1993



➔ Namco invented the powerslide as we know it today with this storming arcade racer. It lost out to *Daytona USA* in terms of profits, but started a franchise that's still going strong. **B+**

"Gran Turismo screwed it up for everyone—in the best possible way..."



→ Some of us are getting tired of driving around tracks, hence the need for freestyle racing games like *Burnout* and *Wreckless*. Sure, *NASCAR* can provide for spectacular crashes, but it's more exciting when innocent bystanders are involved.



with the awesome—and underappreciated in the United States—*Burnout* and *Burnout 2*. While both *Ralliesport Challenge* and *Sega GT* are excellent examples of their respective genres, the *Burnouts* are part of a flourishing subgenre that allows players to race through cities teeming with pedestrians and other traffic. Other notables are Bunkasha's Xbox version of *Wreckless* (the PS2 version is much less impressive) and another series from Digital Illusions, *Midtown Madness*. *Freestyle* is all the rage, at least until *GT4* appears. When it does, chances are it will make good use of Sony's broadband adapter.

As with just about every other genre, racing is about to go online, by time.

Over the next few pages, *GM* takes stock of every racing genre, from *Rally* to *MotoGP*. We tell you what to own, what to want, and how to get into this stuff for real. Just don't blame us if you lose it the next time you're out driving! **E**

FOLLOW THAT CAR!

VIRTUAL SPECTATOR PUTS YOU IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT—FOR REAL



→ As racing games head toward their inevitable online future, a technology pioneered in the U.K. could make broadband racing a truly mass-market phenomenon.

In rally, where you're racing against previous lap times, as opposed to other cars, it's often difficult to know who's in the lead—a problem instantly solved, on a second by second basis, by *Virtual Spectator*. GPS satellite tracking devices attached to rally cars instantly relay data to a computer that displays the information like a videogame, giving an instant read on how each competitor is doing. *Virtual Spectator* started as a tool for sports broadcasters looking for the next on-screen gimmick, but that's the least interesting use of this technology.

It gets cool when you hook that live data up via broadband to thousands of gamer's consoles, through, for example, *Colin McRae* or Sony's *WRC2 Extreme*. In the U.K., where broadband access is still limited, the initial plan is to set up consoles with steering wheels at car dealerships, which always benefit from their cars winning rally championships. If it helps sell cars, then it won't be long before Ford, Subaru, or Mitsubishi are offering a similar arcade experience here. Once you have the GPS data from the race, you can, of course, store it and race any time against the pros.

So, keep your eyes peeled for *Virtual Spectator*. Two years from now, we could all find ourselves online at the same time, waiting for the race to start, and then racing against the likes of McRae, Schumacher, or Eddie Cheever in real time. Beating them is a different matter. **E**



DAYTONA USA (SEGA ARCADE) 1994



→ If you ever wondered what it's like to throw a two-ton Pontiac sideways through a chicane, all it took was a sitting in Daytona's arcade cabinet and giving the steering wheel a tug in the right direction. **E**

SEGA RALLY (SEGA) 1995



→ The coin-op that brought rally to videogames, *Sega Rally* provided tight course design, cool cars, and mud—in abundance. The Saturn version, which appeared in 1995, was almost as good. **E**

GRAN TURISMO (SONY) 1997



→ After years of watching Sega dominate the racing genre, Polyphony Digital stopped messing about with *Motor Toon Racing* and created the definitive driving game: *Gran Turismo* on PS1. **E**



Rally

ROADS? WHERE WE'RE GOING. WE DON'T NEED ROADS. GET DOWN AND DIRTY. OR MUDDY. OR GRAVELLY. OR SNOWY.

THE STATE OF THE ART

ONLINE RALLYING. REAL-TIME LIVE RACE DATA. AND REAL RALLY CARS ON THE ROAD. IT'S WHAT'S NEXT

➔ Rally games have come a long way since the first *Sega Rally* coin-op. Infogrames has the not bad *V-Rally*; Sega has, of course, *Sega Rally*; Microsoft has the excellent *Rallisport Challenge*, and Codemasters has the masterful *Colin McRae* (see review on page 68). On the horizon is *Encore's Rally Championship* for GameCube, and suddenly, rally is all the rage. Or, at least, becoming more popular, not least because of the arrival of real rally cars on U.S. roads. With last year's introduction of Subaru's rally-bred WRX, many are predicting that rally racing—traditionally the sport of woolly-hat wearing Northern Europeans—could catch on here. Mitsubishi is about to jump into the fray with its Evo VIII [0-60 in a terrifying, Porsche-slaying, five seconds], and Subaru is about to launch a 300-horsepower WRX Sti. Ever wonder what a small dog would feel like strapped the nose cone of an F-16? Now you can find out. America is about to get a taste of what Japan and Europe have been enjoying for years: stupidly quick saloons.

Which means we're going to see more, not fewer, rally games in the future. We may even get to play the follow-up to one of the genre's most promising titles, Sony's *WRC* [see sidebar]. Along with that prospect and the addition of Virtual Spectator technology into console gaming, there's also the possibility we could be racing live against Colin McRae himself over broadband. The potential for leagues and championships—even online teams—is huge. So grab your anorak and your matching Momo driving gloves, and hang on for dear life. America is about to get fast. 🏆

➔ Despite the presence of Colin McRae and a number of licensed cars in its games, Codemasters doesn't have the official license of the World Rally Championship. That belongs to Sony-owned Evolution Studios and its critically acclaimed *WRC* games for PlayStation. You've never heard of them? It's hardly surprising. Sony, which successfully published the games in the United Kingdom and Europe, left *WRC* to a third party over here. Bam Entertainment released *WRC* in the United States last year, but it failed to sell enough copies to make it even a modest hit, which is a shame, because that leaves the sequel, *WRC2*, without a Stateside home. Too small for Sony. Too risky for Bam.

WRC2 is certainly the most realistic rally game on the shelves in the detail department. Cars can be realistically fiddled with, and the courses, cars, and

championships are all modeled on real-world *WRC* material. Every race is intercut with cool graphics and video from real *WRC* races, and the driver and car lineups are the without equal [only McRae is absent, thanks to his deal with Codemasters]. *WRC2* is no slouch in the graphics department, either. The draw-distance is impressive, as you can often see from one mountain to the next, and the car models look stunning. But, as with any racing game, it's the feel that counts, and *WRC2* feels just right—tougher than *CMR3*, but accessible enough for you to get your feet wet without taking them bitten off.

The *WRC* games are also the most likely to see the implementation of the fledgling Virtual Spectator technology. Evolution Studios boss Martin Kennigh is an avid proponent of the system. So, *WRC2* (which may be shown at this year's



Encore's Rallisport Rally Championship



The unreleased WRC2 Extreme



In Your Garage

MASTER THESE THREE GAMES AND YOU'LL BE A RALLY CHAMP. OR AT LEAST A CO-DRIVER

300 RALLISPORT CHALLENGE (XB360)



➔ Breathtaking graphics that make driving almost secondary to gazing out the window characterize Microsoft's first Xbox rally title. Almost. But pry your eyes away from the lush scenery for a moment and you'll notice *Rallisport Challenge* turns out to be every bit as good as *Colin McRae*. 🏆

GMR 8¹⁰

300 SEGA RALLY (SATURN/ARC05)



➔ Short, intense tracks [preferable in many ways to today's three-mile long courses], stiff competition, and an arcade-style clock demand respect and provide a tough and thrilling race environment. For the full effect, seek out the coin-op with its full Celica-style cabinet. They're still out there somewhere. 🏆

GMR 9¹⁰

300 COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3 (PS2/XB360)



➔ Codemaster's latest deftly threads the line between simulation and fun with a second-to-none handling and physics model. The courses are tighter than *Rallisport*'s, but the insistence on driving the official McRae vehicle—the Ford Focus—takes off some of the Championship mode's shine. Still, it's fast, entertaining, and deep. 🏆

GMR 8¹⁰



→ The original 1995 Sega Rally coin-op. Note the two seats, two wheels, and two screens.

E3) could have an online component that's second to none. The question is, will it get a U.S. release?

COMING SOON...

RALLISPORT CHALLENGE 2: LIVE

Well, the Swedish development team behind last year's *Rallisport Challenge* might disagree on the online point. There's been no formal announcement of a follow-up, but the critical praise and reasonably strong sales that greeted *R2* make a sequel likely. As with many Microsoft first-party titles, if there is a *Rallisport Challenge 2* it would almost certainly be Xbox Live compatible.

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Crowds cheer and whoop like caffeinated baboons as you slide past, and the car's handling is definitely on the hooverscraft side of floaty—that's *Encore's* GameCUBE rally game. Due sometime this spring, it's a much less technical, more arcadey effort than other rally games. The copy we played was fun, but obviously lacked the depth of handling common to the more sim-oriented rally titles. Not that GameCUBE owners will be complaining—racing is yet another genre that's woefully underrepresented on Nintendo's box. ☹



KNOW YOUR...

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP (WRC)



Oasis forged ahead, and the day of the off-roader.

Woolly hats and knockers

No, it's not what you think. Rally is notorious for the "woolly hat" crowd—especially in Northern Europe. These fans are characterized by their devotion to rally and their insistence on standing too close to the track on tight bends (never a good idea in rally, where the supercharged cars are as likely to be off the track during a race as on it). Some graduate to "knockers,"

attempting to bang on the roof of the car as it hurtles by at fifty miles per hour. In other words, they're morons.

Where is everybody?

In rallying, you're not racing directly with other cars. Instead, you're racing your opponent's lap time. You might think this sounds a bit dull, but in reality it makes for gripping tournaments. It's sort of turn-based, and it leads to some real rivalries.

Very small cars

Recently, the smaller cars have been winning all the tournaments, usurping the Subarus and Mitsubishi that dominated in past years. The current fave? The Guinea pig-sized Peugeot 206.



TALK

COLIN MORRIS
CO-DRIVER
GUEST, NICKY LUP



GMR: So what's it take to be a good co-driver?

Grist: The key points are a good level of concentration, in-depth concentration, and more importantly, a good nerve.

GMR: OK—who gets the blame when you crash? Or you McRae?

Grist: It really does depend on who's fault the accident is in the first place.

Generally it is more often than not the drivers fault, but a co-driver will never win a rally, only lose it in most people's eyes.

GMR: How did you get into rallying?

Grist: I started by watching a local national event on public open roads, then the bug took over.

GMR: We bet you've got a pretty fancy car. Are we right?

Grist: I have a Porsche Carrera 4. The car has performance, handling, and looks—all in that order. It's these things that make a great car.

GMR: Yep, that's pretty fancy. So why do you think rallying is still a small-time sport in the United States?

Grist: I would say that America doesn't really know rallying because it's just not on TV there. Speed TV is showing the WRC now, and its popularity is growing fast. It's by far the most spectacular form of four-wheel motorsport out there. Check it out for yourself.

GMR: We'd like to, but we're scared. If we did, what should we drive to win?

Grist: Results always speaks for themselves, and if its results it has to be the Peugeot 206.

GMR: What's a Peugeot? Sounds kinda crap. Thanks anyway, Nicky! ☹



BUY ONE, GET ONE FREE!

NOT REALLY. YODUPUS, BUT NOW YOU CAN BUY THE CARS YOU RACE IN THE GAME, FOR REAL.



→ They may look like a couple of overtuned saloons, but, oh-vait—they are overtuned saloons. Kind of. The Mitsubishi Evo VIII is available now, and the Subaru WRX STi will be out by summer. They can leave Porsche 911's standing and cost less than \$30,000. Yes, we know that's still a lot, but not for what you get: the scariest racing on the face of the Earth. Go on, start saving. ☹



IN REAL LIFE

WANT TO LEARN HOW TO DRIVE A REAL RALLY CAR? TRY TIM O'NEIL'S RALLY SCHOOL.



→ Featured in countless car mags, this school is headed up by ex pro-rally champ Tim O'Neil, and is widely regarded as the place in the U.S. to learn how to drive sideways. Through trees. In the snow. The school offers all-inclusive accommodations and car chugging courses over two, three, and four days. They also provide Subaru Impreza WRX rally cars to drive. www.team-one.com ☹



WHEN CAN I PLAY ONLINE?

NOT NOW, BUT THERE IS HOPE THAT THE NEXT BATCH OF GAMES WILL BE BROADBAND READY

→ Good question. Our best guess is that the next round of rally games will all be broadband compatible to varying degrees. Microsoft has to be prepping *Rallisport Challenge 2* for a pretty robust online mode to support its fledgling Xbox Live service, though, as of press time, the game remains officially "unannounced." Expect to see something new at E3 (next issue). Sega could also be in the picture. Years ago, it had Sega Rally on Saturn hooked up in Japan via Netlink, and Sega Rally 3 will almost certainly happen this year, on PS2. With *Midnight Club 2* and *Auto Modelista* making the jump to online play, we'd like to bet that Sega will want in. ☹



Grand Prix

TO EVERYTHING. TURN. TURN. TURN. THERE IS A SEASON. ETC. SIGH...

TALK

INDYCAR CHAMP
BOBBY CHEEVER



➔ GMR: New technology utilizing GPS tracking will soon allow gamers to race you in real-time on their PlayStation 2's. Do you think you'll ever be beat by some guy sitting in his armchair?

Cheever: I think any use of technology to enhance our ability to solve problems should always be embraced, even if it is just to make a game more enjoyable. If enough people participate then of course somebody would beat me. But to make the game a little bit more "real," you need to have someone standing behind you with a baseball bat hitting you as hard as they can when you make a mistake. **GMR:** What's the most frightening experience you've ever had while driving, either on the track or off it, and how did you deal with it? I crashed at Indy at 240 miles per hour. I dealt with it the same way I deal with every accident I have in the race car, which is you dissect it, find the problem, and make sure you don't do it again. To err is human, to repeat is to inflict. **✚**

➔ Grand Prix is short for Grand Prix de Paris, originally an international horse race established in 1863 at Longchamp in Paris. Grand Prix literally means "Grand Prize." In modern terms, Grand Prix has come to symbolize various types of sanctioned racing, from the high-powered open-wheel cars of Formula 1 to Superbikes to the heavily modified touring cars of TOCA. What these diverse racing leagues have in common are the complicated and technical road courses they race on, like Hockenheim in Germany or the world-famous GP course in Monaco.

Since the days of Pole Position, F1 games have been a videogame staple. Hardly ever does a new console launch without having some sort of Grand Prix game among its launch titles. It just proves what a global market games cater to. Grand Prix-style racing is big all over the world except in the United States, where NASCAR is still king.

Attesting to Grand Prix's world popularity is the fact that most F1, LeMans, and TOCA cars are made by European manufacturers, though the Japanese have started making a bigger splash. **✚**



Infogrames' 64 Motor LeMans



Cosmos' 16-bit 5-Turbo Rally offers

THE STATE OF THE ART

THE TRACKS AND CARS DON'T CHANGE, BUT THE STORIES BEHIND THEM DO

➔ F1 games are a staple of gaming for both consoles and the PC, and great games of the genre—usually from EA Sports' superb F1 series—are almost guaranteed every year.

Infogrames, one of the biggest publishers of racing games, is set to

release Grand Prix Challenge for PS2 this spring. Pro Race Driver, available for PS2 and coming soon to Xbox and PC, is one of a new generation of Car-POs, or racing games with a plot behind them. Just as long as said plots aren't lifted from Days of Thunder or Driven. **✚**

KNOW YOUR... FORMULA 1 RACING

➔ Lots of models
Not car models—super models. They can't keep away from Formula 1 drivers, and most are so stick-thin, they could probably fit in the car with the driver while they're racing. Or double as a spoiler.

Ferrari always wins

It's getting silly: Michael Schumacher has won the championship for his Ferrari team so many times, audience figures are tumbling. When you know who's going to win, it makes watching the race a tad dull. Incidentally, the same could be said of British soccer... **✚**



In Your Garage

GMA'S SELECTIVE HISTORY OF THE TOP GP GAMES OF ALL TIME

GRAND PRIX 4 [PC]



➔ One of the most authentic F1 simulations on the PC comes from a single programmer who's achieved a Sid Meier-like level of cred. U.K.-born Geoff Crammond has been designing games since the '80s, and his games for Microprose are legendary thanks to crisp graphics, detailed sound, and finely tuned physics. **✚**

GMR 9/10

GRAND PRIX LEGENDS [PC]



➔ Pagurus, the developer behind the NASCAR Racing series, made one of the most difficult racing games of all time, Grand Prix Legends. GPL re-creates the 1967 F1 season, when cars weren't much more than cigars on wheels. No downforce (those little wings) means just getting around the track without spinning out is a feat within itself. **✚**

GMR 9/10





In Your Garage

GMA'S GUIDE TO THE ESSENTIAL GAMES EVERY NASCAR FAN SHOULD HAVE IN THEIR GAME LIBRARY

» NASCAR LEGENDS [PC]



It's 1970. Big muscle cars like the Plymouth Superbird and Ford Torino Talladega, and classic drivers like Richard Petty and Cale Yarborough, rule NASCAR. Built on the NASCAR Racing 3 engine, Legends perfectly re-creates that bygone era. **B+**

GMR 9¹⁰

» NASCAR HEAT [PC/PS2]



NASCAR Heat sported great driving aids and scenarios. The best was a white-knuckle ride through a multilap pileup. With good difficulty scaling, Heat treated NASCAR like a game instead of a simulator, although the driving physics would suggest otherwise. **B+**

GMR 9¹⁰

» DIRT TO DAYTONA [PS2/PC]



There's a lot more to NASCAR than the Winston Cup, and Dirt to Daytona takes you through a Career mode that spans everything from amateur dirt tracks to the Craftsman Truck Series, from the Busch Series to the SuperBowl of NASCAR, the Daytona 500. **B+**

GMR 9¹⁰



NASCAR

AMERICA'S NO. 1 SPORT IS A WHOLE LOT MORE THAN HILLBILLIES TURNING LEFT

Beer. Mom's apple pie. Mullet. Beer. NASCAR. These things lie at the core of our American identity—or so every reductionist jackwad in the world would have you believe. But truthfully, NASCAR is amazingly popular (as is this so-called beer, or so we've been told) in the States, with millions of fans supporting a multi-billion-dollar industry. As a result, there have been scads of NASCAR games on all platforms, from the ridiculously arcadey *NASCAR Rumble* to the king of the simulations, *NASCAR Racing*.

NASCAR gamers seem to be split into two distinct categories: those who enjoy the raw power and beefy feel of a 700hp engine strapped to a fiberglass puppet, and those who appreciate the finer nuances of car tuning, aerodynamics, and subtle driving techniques. The former group tends towards the console

versions of the game, and appears to have a lot more in common with your average NASCAR fan. The latter are only satisfied with the more simulation-like games that seem only to be possible on the PC.

The best of the hardcore simulations comes from Boston-based developers Papyrus, which has an amazing pedigree of racing games on multiple platforms. Papyrus has covered other racing leagues like Indy and F1, but NASCAR has been its bread and butter, so many where surprised when it announced it was ending its relationship with Sierra and NASCAR. No word yet on what the company will be doing next (some rumors have suggested it'll make a follow-up to the classic *Grand Prix Legends*), but it will be multi-platform and it will be racing. It is what Papyrus does best, after all. **A-**



EA's NASCAR Racing 2003 by Papyrus



EA's NASCAR Rumble

THE STATE OF THE ART

WHERE THERE'S THUNDER, THERE'S LIGHTNING

With Papyrus out of the picture for the foreseeable future, the only option left for PC NASCAR fans is EA's *NASCAR Thunder* series. That won't satisfy the serious sim freaks (though they'll probably just keep playing the latest version for years, constantly downloading team updates and paint schemes), but it'll have to do for now. Console gamers should have a lot to look forward to, however, with *NASCAR Thunder* con-

siderably more suited to the consoles. Don't forget about Infogrames, either, which is releasing *Dirt to Daytona* for the PS2 any day now. **B+**



KNOW YOUR.
NASCAR
DRIVERS

Driver allegiance is an integral part of NASCAR fan culture. Attend any Winston Cup race and you'll see people adorned in the colors and numbers of their favorite drivers. It's like a bunch of walking billboards. #40 Coors Silver Bullet? That's a Sterling Martin fan right there. #5 Viagra? That's one die-hard Mark Martin follower.

But the golden boy of NASCAR is none other than the crown prince himself, Dale Earnhardt Jr. Dale Jr. also happens to be a hardcore gamer, with a basement outfitted with its own PC gaming network where he and other drivers on the tour get together for online racing sessions of *NASCAR Racing*. Occasionally, they even take on everyday gamers over the Internet. Of course, it wouldn't be a millionaire bachelor pad without a fully functioning nightclub called Club E. Sounds like the ultimate pit stop. **B+**

RACING RESOURCES
A ONE-STOP INFO SHOP FOR ANYONE RACING ONLINE

ON THE EDGE
RACING
WHERE RACERS LIVE ON THE EDGE

NASCAR Racing 2003 is extremely popular online, with servers capable of hosting full fields of 42 drivers running all the time. Online leagues and teams abound, and they trade everything from stats to paint jobs to tuning tips online.

A great resource for anyone who wants to know more about the virtual world of NASCAR and racing simulations in general is www.oteracing.com. **B+**



Tuning

YOU HAVE AN INTEGRA BUT YOU JUST CAN'T LEAVE IT ALONE. CAN YOU? SPOILERS, MUD-FLAPS, AIMS. GOTTA GET IT ALL. FOR THE LOVE OF TUNING



➔ Ten years ago, the average teen-to-mid 20s driver was usually fairly content with the car he/she was driving, in stock form. Sure, the urge to chuck the AM/FM radio for a new Kenwood tape deck was standard reflex, but aside from that and a pair of fuzzy dice, a Honda Civic fresh off the lot was basically good to go. Nowadays, it's a completely different story. A standard-issue car with its default rims, untinted glass, no logos, no Hello Kitty seat covers, and no spoiler is about as fashionable as wearing your underwear on the outside of your pants.

As the popularity of modifying your

whip became more and more commonplace, so too did the proliferation of racing games that let you, the gamer, tinker with things. All of a sudden, an international community of armchair videogame mechanics was messing around with their suspension, their transmission, their aftermarket parts desires, and sometimes even their logos. So, where exactly did this glacial shift in vehicle-personalization and upgrading take place? When did the dinosaur arcade racing games of the Earth, with their three-car/three-track selection, go the way of the woolly mammoth? Why does nearly every racing game released today

"GT raised the bar for any developer making a driving game."



KNOW YOUR... POLYPHONY DIGITAL

The rich history of Polyphony Digital

➔ You've probably heard of *Gran Turismo*, a game that almost didn't arrive in the United States under that name because Sony's sage execs at the time thought "*Gran Turismo*" might be too exotic for American brains. Thank goodness they were wrong. But have you heard of Polyphony Digital, the development team that turned the racing world on its ear?

Although it formed in 1996 and went on to create the critically

acclaimed *Gran Turismo* series, Polyphony also crafted the excellent *Panzer Dragoon*-esque mech-shooter *Omega Boost* (which, at one point, was running on bleem!). But before it officially formed as Polyphony Digital, a large chunk of the now-famous development team was responsible for the *Motor Toon Grand Prix* series on PlayStation. Two *Motor Toon* games were made, but only the second game made it here, as *Motor Toon Grand Prix* (1996). ◀



► Sony's unreleased-in-the-States *Gran Turismo Concept 2002 Tokyo-Driver* (cough, gasp!), besides having an exorbitantly long name, is loaded with exotic concept cars (duh!) that you will almost certainly never see for real. From the Back to the Future-esque COME-01 (top left, pronounced "dome-zero") to the non-concept but still highly unobtainable Aston Martin Vanquish (below).





have no fewer than fifty cars to choose from? You could blame it on Vin Diesel and his super-crappy cinematic disaster-piece, *The Fast and the Furious* (soon to be out-stupided by *2Fast2Furious*, now with 100 percent less Vin). But in truth, *The Fast* merely tapped into the zeitgeist of today's youthful driver—the very same gamers who thrive on the tuning game's shining light, *Gran Turismo*.

Along with its own significant game-based merits, *GT* also raised the bar for any developer thinking of making a driving game. The irony is that, despite the comprehensive car rosters in today's tuning games, the real hook is that driving your '92 Acura Integra is suddenly sexy. No longer must gamers play make-believe in cars they'll most likely never even see, let alone purchase. Taking to the "streets" in virtual wheels you already own has something to be said for it. When you can dress the car up or strip it down in any way you see fit, it only gets better. **1C**



THE STATE OF THE ART

WE SET OUR SIGHTS ON GAMES THAT WILL SATISFY OUR INSATIABLE TUNING NEEDS

➔ With tuning-specific racers still a relatively new entry to the larger racing genre, developers (despite *Gran Turismo 3*) still have a ways to go before exhausting the possibilities this style of game can support. Take *Auto Modellista*, for example. Capcom's tuning-heavy, toon-shaded blast of heavy metal not only adds an online capacity, but also lets gamers flaunt their tricked-out, souped-up cars (developed in offline mode) in virtual toolboxes where others can view them and discuss them. Factor in the near-endless available color combinations, along with the cornucopia of banners and items with which to pimp out your 3D garage, and *Auto Modellista* practically screams "fan service." This is a good thing.

Will future games in the category do anything to break new ground? Well, the little we know of *Gran Turismo 4*—other than that it's coming—is that it will be online compatible. Broadband? Most definitely. 56K? Not so sure. Besides that, the rumor mill insists *GT4* will also offer downloadable content, which would (along with the very non-racing *Final Fantasy X*) require the hard drive. Can you say "bundle?" The biggest question with *GT4* is when, exactly, it will come out. The smart money is on—hold on to your cup holders—2004. On the Xbox side of things, with no new Sega *GT* on the horizon, it's up to Capcom's *Group-S Challenge* to save the day. *Group-S* is a racer that takes you through a circuit of races using slower cars, with the goal of working your way up to the fastest class, *Group-S*. Although the game doesn't rely on gimmicky features like cell-shading, and boasts more than 20 worldwide tracks, it's an alarmingly normal racer. But we'll reserve final judgement until we get a reviewable **1C**



4—Is Capcom planning on ditching the survival-horror genre in lieu of making racing games? Probably not, but even so, with *Auto Modellista* on the rack, and their upcoming Xbox-exclusive game, *Group-S Challenge*, nearing completion, it looks like Capcom's taking their racing games seriously. These *Group-S* shots (left) should give you an idea of how detailed the car models are.



In Your Garage

YOU CAN FIDDLE AROUND WITH PARTS ALL DAY. BUT UNLESS YOU'VE GOT THE RIGHT GAMES, YOU AIN'T GOT JACK

» TOKYO EXTREME RACER 2 (DC)



➔ When it comes to tuning games, no better example exists than Genki's *Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2* for Dreamcast. Although none of the cars were licensed, they were accurate and detailed enough that you could tell. Honda Civics from Acura Integras. Loads of aftermarket parts made this game the grease-monkey's dream. The big drawback is that some races run as short as fifteen seconds in length. **1C**

GMR 8¹⁰

» GRAN TURISMO (PS2)



➔ It's not as if the *Gran Turismo* series wasn't already acclaimed enough. But with *GT3* for PS2, Polyphony Digital, finally had the power to realize its vision. While the game featured a smaller roster of cars than previous *GTs*, it set new standards in graphics and control, and even improved the Rally mode. This will remain the definitive racing game until *Gran Turismo 4* comes our way. **1C**

GMR 9¹⁰

» SEGA GT 2002 (X6)



➔ No, it is not as glossy as *Gran Turismo 3*. Nor does it handle as well, offer as many cars, or feature a Rally mode (good thing Sega has its own rally games, eh?). But *Sega GT 2002* still gives gamers loads of old cars to mess around with, tune to perfection, and, ultimately, bring out onto the open road. The real attraction is the Chrome mode, which lets gamers play classic cars through the ages. Acc. **1C**

GMR 8¹⁰



TALK

GMR SITS DOWN WITH YOSHIO SUDO, PRODUCER OF AUTO MODELLISTA, TO SEE WHAT MAKES CAPCOM'S CEL-SHADED RACER TICK, AND TOCK



GMR: Hi, and thanks for answering our questions. First, what is the focus of the game? Is *Auto Modellista* meant to be a sim, an arcade racer, or a tuning-freak's dream game?

SUDO: It's a little bit of everything you've described, but even more in that it's an online racing game.

GMR: Regarding the handling, it's not quite on the *Gran Turismo* side of things. Nor is it quite in *Ridge Racer*'s realm. Where did you want to go with the controls?

SUDO: While both *Gran Turismo* and *Ridge Racer* are great games, we strove to create our own unique style. We intentionally overexaggerated the characteristics common in cars—performance, speed, and power—to make them more appealing for this type of game.

GMR: While certain parts, like the car's computer or weight-reduction, are supposed to enhance performance, do cosmetic parts like T-bars do anything to affect handling and speed?

SUDO: The external add-on parts are there for making your car look cooler and more stylized. Lots of gamers who are car enthusiasts love customizing

the appearance of their vehicle, so we put in the customization feature to satisfy them. Being able to show off your personalized car to others via the Internet is just another reason this is a fun game.

GMR: What's the best car for tackling the mountain stages? Those mountain stages are tough!

SUDO: Try getting accustomed to the track using a lightweight car. Once you know how to maneuver through the stage, race with other cars until you find the one that's right for you.

GMR: What sort of feedback from the beta testers did you apply to the final game? What's an example of something that plays in a certain way because of user feedback?

SUDO: There are several areas in which we've used their comments. The basic car physics, enemy A.I., and total control scheme are a few that come to mind.

GMR: How much has changed from the Japanese version to the European version to the U.S. version in terms of the handling and features?

SUDO: The car physics and enemy A.I. are two areas that have evolved drastically from version to version. The

U.S. version also features free online play, nine additional cars including classic American muscle cars, more than 100 additional tuning parts to fine-tune the new racers, modified car physics allowing for massive power slides, and three new tracks. We've also modified the computer A.I. for more realistic and dynamic racing. A new opening demo highlights the new features and gameplay.

GMR: What was the hardest thing to develop in the game: the graphics engine, the handling, the sense of speed, the special car parts?

SUDO: The hardest thing to develop was probably creating the graphics from the bottom up. Another difficult task was creating and adjusting the car physics. It's really wasn't a matter of difficulty, but rather of ensuring things were done right. That's a responsibility you have as a game designer.



GMR: Can you tell us about any deeply hidden secret parts or funny developer Easter eggs in the game?

SUDO: There really aren't any "deep secrets," so to speak. But the more you play, the more add-ons and customized parts you can obtain. I think the design aspect of the game will be really fun! **1E**

To read our review of *Auto Modellista*, check page 61 for the straight poop.

PARTS

SAID YOU COULD DRIVE IT STUCK BUT THEN YOU'D BE AN IDIOT



While none of the cars in videogames look nearly as ridiculous as the things kids do to their rides in real life, we thought we'd give you a head start on corrupting your own particular vehicle. Outfitting your Civic or Integra (or whatever) with a bra is practically mandatory for deflecting stones, while a canister of nitrous oxide, a high-tilt!n!n! spoiler, and extra sexy rims round out the four basic food groups. **1E**

CONCEPT

A LOOK AT THE TWO OF GAMES FOR PS2 THAT NEVER WERE



Released in Europe and Asia, although not in "cough" Japan and the United States, *Gran Turismo Concept 2001 Tokyo* and *2002 Tokyo* use the GT engine to great effect, plus add more than two dozen exotic prototypes while subtracting that pesky of Simulation mode. Strictly arcade racing with beautiful visuals, it's a shame we'll never see these appear in the States due to copyright issues. **1E**

ONLINE

WHAT WILL THE FUTURE BRING IN THE WAY OF ONLINE RACING?

As broadband marches jackbootedly into more and more gamers' homes, it won't be long before every racing game has an online component. Although only a few have dared to go online (*Auto Modellista*, *Midnight Club II*), we expect upcoming "tuners" like *Gran Turismo 4* to blaze new trails, adding not only online racing, but a wealth of lobbies designed to rank the world's best virtual drivers.

How soon will online racing become the standard? We suspect not until every videogame console comes packed with a built-in broadband adapter like the Xbox does. With the number of Xbox Live subscribers growing by the day, we're sure Sony's taking interest in the business model, and Nintendo's wondering why they didn't just build a narrow and broadband connection into their little box. **1E**



Freestyle

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO LIVE OUTSIDE THE LINES, WE PROUDLY PRESENT THE FOUR-WHEELED EQUIVALENT OF FREEDOM ROCK. TURN IT UP, MAN!

➔ **5-0. PoPo.** The pigs. Whichever sobriquet you choose to use when referring to our boys in blue, mix the police with fast cars, crowded city streets, and burning rubber, and you're guaranteed a good time—or at least a good smash up. Which is why we keep our highway high jinks strictly onscreen. Sometimes we're the cops. Sometimes we're the (hot)odders. Either way, the freestyle genre always offers an adrenalinized alternative to precision racing.

Earlier forays in the genre include *Speed Devils* for Dreamcast—one of the first console racers to feature online play—and

the pretty, if flawed, *Runabout* series, which made appearances on both PlayStation and Dreamcast. A third *Runabout* game, dubbed *Message*, saw the light of day on PS2 in Japan, but wasn't missed here. More notable was the lovable *Beetle Adventure Racing*, one of the best four-wheeled racers for N64. The PC-only *Midtown Madness 1* and 2



Ubi Soft's *Speed Devils* untune Racing



Midtown Madness 2



BRING BLING!

BECAUSE WHEELLESS BOYS BECAME WHEELLESS THUGS



➔ Going on a four-cylinder rampage through the mini mall? Bring a radar detector and some lunch—revving that engine sure is hard work! Pimp out your wheels with a sticker of one cartoon icon smugly urinating on another—that'll let folks know where you stand with authority. And don't forget, you can always get your motor runnin' with a marathon of *World's Scariest Police Chases* on Fox. 1-8



THE STATE OF THE ART

STUFFED TO THE SHEET METAL WITH AMBITION AND ATTITUDE, TWO RECKLESS RACERS PACKED WITH ADVENTURE AND ONLINE PLAY ARE POISED TO CHEW UP THE CONSOLE STREETS

➔ Given Hollywood's recent preoccupation with being bad, it's no wonder a new breed of racers looks more like *The Fast and the Furious* than *C.H.I.P.s*. Part of the PS2 launch, Rockstar Games' *Midnight Club* perfectly fit that bill. Set loose in abstract versions of New York and London, players pitted pink slips against after-hours speed demons.

The sequel doesn't steer too far from this formula, but the action has

been moved to Los Angeles, Tokyo, and Paris, and every aspect of the game, from gameplay to graphics, has been given a real kick in the ass. An easy-to-use race editor enables players to assign their own checkpoints and race conditions, while the addition of fast and fragile motorcycles should have armchair biker boyz grinning. All of this and online action, too, when *Midnight Club 2* comes to PS2 in April, Xbox in May, and PC in June.

While we haven't had hands-on time with Digital Illusion's forthcoming freestyler since last year, we anticipate great things when the *Midtown Madness* franchise makes the jump from PC to Xbox. The series has always paid fanatical attention to accurately capturing the look and feel of various cities; right now, the developers are putting finishing touches on Paris and Washington, D.C., replete with ambient traffic and pesky pedestrians.

Players take the wheel of 30-plus vehicles as they race to the next checkpoint, taking any street, sidewalk, or shortcut available. *Midtown Madness 3* also includes more than 50 Career mode missions, enabling players to live vicariously as limo drivers, pizza delivery people, cabbies, and—surprise, surprise—as cops. Considering the series' esteemed heritage, expect a lot of eyes on this one when it rolls off the lot, Xbox Live-enabled, in June. 1-8



Rockstar's *Midnight Club 2*



Midnight Club 2



Ubi Soft's *Midtown Madness 3*



Midtown Madness 3

"Burnout 2 qualifies in our books as an irreverent, if not illicit, thrill..."



Acclaim's *Burnout 2: Point of Impact*

While there's plenty of competition, *Burnout 2: Point of Impact* (below) remains a freestyle favorite. We asked Criterion Studios' Alex Ward whether the good folks at Criterion did any hands-on research in crafting their turbocharged terror. Said Ward: "Several team members had a lot of incidents with the local circuit. There have been a few speeding tickets issued." Now that's dedication to your craft.



Rockstar Games' on-and-off road *Smuggler's Run: The Wrathons*



Know Your...

YOUR CAR HAS A LIMITS.
SO DOES THE LAW...



When you see those flashers in the rearview mirror, all the kanji stickers, glow sticks, ground effects, and whistle-tips in the world can't keep you from a ticket...or worse. But GMR can. Read on for some helpful pointers

- 1) Don't be an idiot. Sudden movements, getting out of the car, and muttering "oh s—t, oh s—t," this is not happening! all quality as highly suspicious behavior.
- 2) Likewise, don't be a hothead. Highway and traffic officers are trained to decide whether or not they plan to issue a citation before they even reach your car, but we're pretty sure they reserve the right to change their minds.
- 3) Some people seem genuinely caught off guard when an officer asks for "driver's license, registration, and proof of insurance, please." These are the same people who don't have a grasp on "No smoking near the pumps." Never be one of these people.
- 5) If the music glorifies cop killing, substance abusing, devil worship, or anything that would otherwise offend folks over the age of 18, turn it down.
- 4) Of course you didn't know how fast you were going. Honestly is the best policy, but not always the best excuse. Keep a cool head and Mom and Dad may never have to know you were doing 120 in the Caravan. And please, if you spy those bright lights, stash the *High Times* air freshener... ☹

made many a fan, with polished play, meticulously modeled clyscapers, and a variety of online modes. Xbox owners can get in on the fun with No. 3 this June.

More recently, Infogrames' venerable *Test Drive* series failed to find the right line between arcade game and sim, while EA's just-as-long-in-the-tooth *Need for Speed* series had a winning return to form (particularly on PS2) with *Hot Pursuit 2*. The Xbox strutted its stuff with Activision's sparkly *Wreckless*, but PS2 and GameCube versions, stripped of the pretty effects, revealed a mediocre core. And let's not forget the car wreck that was *World's Scariest Police Chases*, shall we?

Rockstar Games has made fleeing the fuzz a substantial and lucrative part of its repertoire. *Smuggler's Run* (and sequels) and *Midnight Club* featured refreshingly freeform gameplay (an element later folded into the GTA series, taking gamers from the heart of illegal street competition to rugged back country where roads are purely decorative. Both are available for less than \$20 as part of Sony's Greatest Hits lineup.

Currently, Acclaim's *Burnout 2: Point of Impact* for the PS2 leaves other freestyle racers in the dust, with gloriously shiny visuals, stunningly spectacular smash-ups, and the nearly narcotic thrill of hurtling head on and full throttle into traffic, all of which qualifies in our books as an irreverent, if not illicit, thrill. Xbox and GameCube versions are on the way, and should rock just as hard. ☹



CRIME ONLINE

MIDNIGHT MADNESS AND MIDNIGHT CLUB WILL SOON GO ONLINE. CAPSULE SERIALS? CERTAINLY. START YOUR ENGINE...



➔ So you can't wait for *Project Gotham Racing 2*, and no one seems to want to play a quick game of *Speed Devils Online*. Fear not. More online racing is on the way—assuming you've got the bandwidth...

We've yet to get any hands-on time with *Midtown Madness 3*'s multiplayer modes, but it's been announced that four will be available—including *Capture the Gold* and *Stayaway*—for Xbox Live.

Midnight Club II features a pair of destructive multiplayer modes (*Detonate* and *Capture the Flag*) that should attract the road racer in all of us. PS2 owners can go and join this club right about...now. ☹

In Your Garage



GMR'S SELECTIVE HISTORY OF THE FINEST FREESTYLE RACERS YOU CAN (STILL) FIND

NFS NP2

(GC/PC/PS2/MGB)



➔ Twenty-septers, premium production values, two Career modes, and an emphasis on action make the sixth *Need for Speed* title a winner. The Wanted meter keeps the adrenaline pumping, but players can also play as the police, placing roadblocks and the like. Steer toward the superior PS2 version. ☹



GMR

9/10

BURNOUT 2: POI

(PS2)



➔ So hardcore it doesn't have a hand brake, *B2* is one of the fastest, most felonious racers in recent memory. *B2*'s spectacular effects illuminate outrageous smash-ups at 60FPS. The Crash mode is brainless, brutal, and criminally addictive, and the bangin' rock tunes ain't bad, either, making this a freestyle must have. ☹



GMR

8/10

BEETLE ADV. RACING

(N64)



➔ Packed with tight turns and lots of big air, *Beetle Adventure Racing* let players carve their own paths through an exotic array of locales. With an emphasis on fun, this offbeat N64 exclusive features solid single-player action and surprisingly smooth visuals, making it a real gem and a great addition to any garage. ☹



GMR

8/10



Arcade

IN HEAVEN, THE GOLD-PLATED STREETS ARE LINED WITH LINKED DAYTONA CABINETS—AND THEY ONLY COST A QUARTER

➔ Engine balancing? Limited slip differentials? Camber angles? Who the hell cares! Let's just race already. If you're the kind of gamer that desires instant gratification from your racing games, chances are you've parted with a fair amount of quarters over the years. And there's been plenty reason to do so.

When you think of driving games in the arcade, you think instantly of Namco. And if you don't think instantly of Namco, then you probably think instantly of Sega. Either way, those have been the two big names since...well, pretty much always. Starting with the classic *Pole Position*, plugging change into a Namco racing game has always been a wise investment. In recent years, the *Ridge Racer* series has dominated arcades and home consoles with tight control, original track and car design, and a great sense of style—and such installment is still distinctly different from the others.

Meanwhile, Sega has the specialty racing thing down pat. *Virtua Racing* was a milestone not only in racing games, but also in 3D technology as a whole. *Daytona USA* is quite possibly the best pure arcade

racer ever, managing to make NASCAR not boring. *F355 Challenge* set a new standard for simulations, as even Ferrari drivers were surprised by how accurate it was. *Scud Race* (aka *Super GT*) pushed the Model 3 hardware as far as it could go. Then it pushed a little harder.

But not every designer felt the unquenchable need for speed should be confined to a single track. Enter the adventure racing subgenre, popularized by the likes of *Roadblasters*, *Power Drift*, *Dutrun*, *Cruisin' USA*, and *San Francisco Rush*. Oh, you still had to get to a certain point by a certain time, but there were many ways of getting to that point, like choosing alternate paths, blowing up competitors, or even driving through buildings—actions the IRL would most certainly frown upon.

And then there are the games that never even made it into the arcade to begin with. Console racers like *R4*, *Metropolis Street Racer* and *Project Gotham Racing*, that are designed ➔



"If you don't think instantly of Namco, then you probably think instantly of Sega."



In Your Garage

THREE GAMES BRING ARCADE THRILLS TO YOUR LIVING ROOM—WITHOUT THE CABINETS OR THE SMELL

DAYTONA USA (ARC)



➔ The ultimate arcade racer, *Daytona USA* condenses the fun aspects of high-speed NASCAR racing into a few intense laps, and does away with all the boring crap. It's an older game, so if you can't find an arcade cabinet anywhere (much less a linked set, try to find a copy of the respectable Saturn or Dreamcast version to play at home. ➔

GMR 9¹⁰

RIDGE RACER TYPE 4 (PS)



➔ It was a close call to make, but *R4* narrowly edged out the likes of *Ridge Racer Ridge Racer 2*, and *Ridge Racer Revolution*. Certainly, the entire series is solid and worth owning, but there's something about the fast and drift feel of *R4* that keeps us coming back for more. Or it could be the incomparable presentation and bumpin' music! ➔

GMR 9¹⁰

F355 CHALLENGE (ARC)



➔ Challenge indeed. This Yu Suzuki-designed racer has only one car: the Ferrari F355. But it got so close to the real thing in terms of handling, shifting and control, real-life drivers of the powerful automobile used *F355* (and its three-monitor cabinet) for a little simulation practice of their own. And that tells you something! ➔

GMR 9¹⁰

THE STATE OF THE ART

UNLESS YOU HAVE \$15,000 OF YOUR OWN CASH TO BLOW, BUT THEN YOU MIGHT AS WELL BUY A REAL CAR...

➔ The arcade is dead. Well, the one that we grew up with is, anyway. Before this silly *Dance Dance* and \$5 bottle of beer thing replaced the cold yet comfortable cornfield rows of similar-looking 2D fighters, obscure Japanese shooters, and *NBA Jam*. Nothing can save it now, but that doesn't mean we can't still enjoy new games. It'll just be in a different environment. Sega and Namco aren't giving up quite yet either, and with the help of Nintendo and Microsoft hardware, their new racers should look good enough to grab the attention of the arcade-turn-nightclub crowd. The Triforce board is a collaboration between Nintendo, Sega, and Namco, and is basically the GameCube hardware jacked-up with more RAM. Sega's Chihiro board is based on the already powerful Xbox hardware, and features the new *DuRun* as its debut racer. Considering the high cost of equipment and lack of arcade space, we'll have to wait and see how prolific these machines become. 1C

with the home user in mind. As the arcade scene threatens to dry up, we'll look increasingly to our consoles to provide our shallow desires for speed with all the frills. If only we could mod our Xboxes with those red coin-reject buttons.

Details have been scarce about the upcoming crop of arcade racers, but we do know that Namco's got some interesting plans. Instead of a full-blown *Ridge Racer 4*, the developer is currently working on the tentatively titled *R*. Whether or not Namco uses the consumer-friendly *Ridge Racer* label remains to be seen, but *R* diverges from the previous games by using real-life cars

and tracks. It'll be a multiplatform release (PS2, GC, Xbox) sometime later this year, and we should find out more details at E3. As for the current state of Sega racing, things are getting busy. We're still eagerly awaiting the late spring debut of the new *DuRun*, currently being developed by AM2 for the Xbox-based Chihiro arcade board (one guess where the home port is going). Sega is being stingy with the info, but we do know that the Ferrari won't be the headlining vehicle. Sega also has some late-year plans to bring over *Initial D*, a racer based on the popular anime series of the same name. Get your motor runnin'. 1C



KNOW YOUR...

RACING WITHOUT A WHEEL IS LIKE TAKING A GIRL OUT TO TACO BELL: YOU COULD, BUT IT JUST ISN'T RIGHT.

Racing with Comfort and Style

➔ The best part about racing in the arcade? Definitely the cabinets. Starting with the basic wheel-and-pedal setup, the virtual driver's seat has evolved throughout the years. We've seen linked sit-down cars with *Daytona USA* and *Ridge Racer*, a driver/gunner setup in Namco's *Lucky 'N Wild*, the triple monitors of *F355 Challenge*, and now the fast-acting hydraulic action of *F-Zero AC*. What does the future hold? How 'bout a 360 degree view, full hydraulics, and an all-leather interior? Of course, it'll be about \$20 per credit... 1C



ONLINE

WE'RE HOPING THIS TAKES OFF, BECAUSE ONLINE RACING IS RAD.

➔ Online racing is already half a generation old (older if you count Mario Kart on XBAND), but we're still waiting for the genre to really take off. *Daytona* saw an online incarnation on Dreamcast, but it suffered from poor network coding and laggy, unreliable play. We have high hopes for *Project Gotham Racing 2* on Xbox Live, but we still don't know when, how, or even if *Ridge Racer* or *DuRun* will go online. All we can do is hope for the best. 1C



BEST COURSE

RIDDOLING STAAAAAGAAART!

➔ There are plenty of outstanding courses in the *Ridge Racer* series, but we're going with the classic first track from *Daytona USA*. From the deceptively challenging turns to the giant Sonic the Hedgehog lounging comfortably on the mountainside, it's the best few minutes a quarter can buy. 1C



ARCADE OR NOT?

JUST IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING WHAT WE MEAN BY "ARCADE"



➔ What makes an arcade racer different? Sure, you have to pump in quarters every time you fail to make checkpoint, but there's more to it than frequent trips to the change machine. Like any arcade-style game, the key is replayability—short courses that stay fresh; a fun, comfortable physics model; and of course, superdeluxe cabinets. 1C



2-Wheels

THE WORLD DOESN'T RUN ON FOUR-WHEELS ALONE. WE CELEBRATE GAMES THAT RIDE ON THE RAZOR'S EDGE

➔ With all the attention given to our four-wheeled friends, it'd be easy to overlook all the wheelies we be poppin' here in the States. To get a grasp on the relative size of the sport in the United States, compare how big soccer is in relation to the NFL, and that pretty much parallels how popular motorcycle racing is in contrast to the behemoth that is NASCAR. But motorcycle racing is growing in popularity, especially with the younger set, which is timely, because this year gamers will be playing some of the best high-speed twofers ever seen on a videogame console.

With hardware finally capable of emulating the high-speed thrills, sprawling tracks, random weather effects, gnat-wrenching physics, and full grid of riders, motorcycle racing on PS2 and Xbox (the GameCube is woefully

lacking in motorcycle games) is so close to the real thing, you can practically smell the burning rubber.

Of course, it'll be a while before names like Roberts, Biaggi, Capirossi, and Harada become household names like Earnhardt, Labonte, Gordon, and Waltrip. But with the appeal of these sleek two-wheeled Japanese and Italian cruise missiles growing every year, expect the fever to spread. **1+**



"Motorcycle racing on PS2 and Xbox is so close to the real thing, you can smell the rubber."



THE STATE OF THE ART

THQ IS READY TO RAISE THE BAR—AGAIN—WITH THE FOLLOW-UP TO MOTOGP FOR XBOX

➔ Motorcycling doesn't qualify as the most prolific of genres, yet for every *MotoGP* we play, we get five *Riding Spirits*. (Sorry, Bam!) *MotoGP*, provided you're referring to the Xbox game, is the *Gran Turismo 3* of motorcycle games. What makes this game so good that we reference it so damn much? Besides the lifelike visuals (not counting the ton of superfluous filters *Climax* has included), and superb rider animations, the ace up *MotoGP*'s sleeve is its ultrafresh control. It feels like the real thing.

Featuring front and rear brakes that, when applied, drop your bike's speed dramatically (as it should), the game also allows the rider to duck behind the fairing for aerodynamic purposes or pull back on the handlebars for jerky-boy wheelies. *MotoGP 2*, scheduled to release this July, features the full 16-track GP circuit (eat that, Namco), new stunt modes, improved graphics, and, of course, multiplayer online support. Yes, the best gets even better. **1+**



CHECK YA HEAD

THE BEST MOTORCYCLE RACING HELMETS IN THE WORLD FOR PROTECTING YOUR EGG



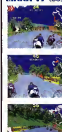
➔ Worn by nearly every *MotoGP* star alive (except for those Shoei-wearin' punks), Arai helmets are known for their technical innovation, looks, and superior comfort. Arais are pricey, but when it comes to shielding your brain, it's worth it. **1+**



In Your Garage

YOU CAN'T PLAY HANG-ON FOREVER. HERE'S SOME ALTERNATIVES

MANX TT (PS)



➔ So what if the game only features one track? Who cares if the Saturn version isn't half the graphical showcase its arcade counterpart is? What matters is that *Manx TT* lets gamers experience one of the world's most dangerous races (races die annually in low-risk fashion. A virtual tour of the U.K.'s Isle of Man, *Manx TT* is awesome stuff. **1+**

GMR

8¹⁰

MOTOGP 3 (PS2)

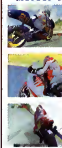


➔ If we left it up to the first two games in the series, neither would make this list. But Namco has finally managed the near-perfect balance of graphics, features, and gameplay in the third installment of this excellent arcade-style racer for PlayStation 2. If you've never tried your hand at GP racing before, there's no better entry point than this. **1+**

GMR

8¹⁰

MOTOGP (XBOX)



➔ Despite the similar name and *MotoGP* license, THQ's *MotoGP* (developed by *Climax*) is completely unrelated to Namco's series. In no uncertain terms, *MotoGP* for Xbox is the best motorcycle racing simulation in the galaxy. Perfect controls, great visuals, and (provided you have the Xbox Live demo online play for up to 16 players. Peerless. **1+**

GMR

9¹⁰

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HOW WE RATE

YOUR GUIDE TO THE GMA SCORING SYSTEM

1 PLATINUM 2 FUSIBLE 3 LAUGHABLE 4 FALLIBLE 5 PLAYABLE 6 STERILABLE 7 COLLECTIBLE 8 ENJOYABLE 9 UNMISSABLE 10 INDESTRUCTIBLE

WARNING! WHERE MULTIPLE VERSIONS OF A GAME ARE REVIEWED, GMA WILL MENTION DIFFERENCES ONLY IF THEY SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT THE GAMEPLAY.

At GMR, we eat, sleep, drink, and occasionally puke games. If we say something sucks, then it sucks. If we award it our prestigious Essential Selection award, then you can take Grandma's savings from under her mattress/husband and spend the lot on copies for you and your pals. Might want to ask her first, though.





→ One of Auto Modellista's coolest features is its garage mode. Gamers can customize one of three different garages in any way they please. The best items are unlocked as the gamer makes his way deeper into the game. Items like Servbots, or Dante emblems for your car (seen below), will be found only on the best driver's cars.



AUTO MODELLISTA

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PUBLISHER CAPCOM
PRICES \$49.99
RELEASE APRIL 2003
PLAYED 1-2 (1-4 ONLINE)
ORIGIN JAPAN

➔ The concept is nearly flawless: Blend a pinch of high-speed, *Ridge Racer*-style racing with a dash of grease-monkey tuning à la *Tokyo Xtreme Racer*. Fold in a soupçon of American, European, and Japanese cars. Beat lightly. Brush on a light coat of cel-shading and add some online [free, but broadband-only] racing for extra flavor. Bake at 450 degrees.

When this particular pie was done cookin', you'd have [in concept] the greatest racing game ever made. What Capcom has pulled from the oven, however, is decidedly different.

It can be argued that little about racing games has changed over the course of

the past 20 years, since the halcyon days of *Pole Position* and [later] *Outrun*. While the industry has spent the last couple decades moving from two dimensions into three, and while scores of classic racers like *Daytona USA* and *Gran Turismo 3* have passed before our eyes, at its core, the racing game still revolves around a singular object (car, motorcycle, horse, whatever) moving into the foreground while the gamer pushes left and right. It's about the handling—one of the simplest concepts around, but one of the hardest to get right. For every *Gran Turismo*, you get six *Driving Emotion Type-S* titles.

Initial inspection of *Auto Modellista* suggests all the core ingredients needed for

a great racing game are in attendance. The pop-art cel-shading and comic book special effects convey a cartoon sense of speed, while the ample car selection and loads of aftermarket parts should satisfy those who would be fast and, quite possibly, furious. It's unfortunate, then, that *Auto Modellista* should falter in the one category that matters most: handling.

The problem is that Capcom's racer can't decide whether it wants to be stupid-fun like *Ridge Racer* or realistic like *Gran Turismo*. *Auto Modellista* instead settles in the middle lane, and because of it, blows a flat on lap one.

Powersliding, for a start, is a disaster. It's nearly impossible to do with any level

2ND. OPINION

If my real-life car slipped into power slides as easily as *Auto Modellista*'s cars do, I'd need a new set of whitewalls weekly. Driving games are all well and good if they increase the fun but if they make it so much that it makes the game harder, well then they've missed the point, haven't they? ➔

—Tom Price



→ Despite its problems, *Auto Modellista* doesn't skimp on the features list. If you lack the broadband capabilities that would have you speeding online against seven other players, the game features standard split-screen action for offline play. Make sure to pick equally matched cars, though. Since the game doesn't restrict you to selecting same-class cars, even with the boost option activated (which helps slower cars keep up with the leader), a Toyota Vitz RS WILL get smoked by a Dodge Viper GTS.

of consistency, and no amount of fiddling with the car's setup will fix it. It's telling that the difference between the regular brake and the handbrake is negligible. It really doesn't matter which one you use; unlike *Ridge Racer*, where a tap of the handbrake and a quick flick of the thumb will throw your back end around in precisely the desired manner, *Auto Modellista*'s handbrake will, more often than not, reward you with a 180-degree oversteer. While we're at it, don't bother picking a car for its front-wheel drive, rear-wheel drive, or mid-mounted engine—pick it because it's pretty. The handling may be marginally different between a Dodge Viper and, say, a Honda Civic, but in the end that's a trifling detail.

Success on nearly any city or circuit course can be yours once you've mastered the technique we at *GMR* like to call airbagging. Airbagging requires the driver to barrel along at full speed until the car is about five virtual feet from the

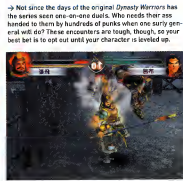
wall, and then to turn at the last second. Since the speed penalty for hitting the wall is negligible (combined with the fact that cars don't suffer structural damage in the game), bouncing off it not only keeps you at top speed for most of the race, it's also less trouble than trying to negotiate the perfect line through a chicane—if done properly, airbagging actually puts you right back on course. And since *Auto Modellista*'s wack physics mean even the best-handling cars drift at the slightest touch of the analog stick, it's better to airbag it. (The Logitech Driving Force wheel, by the way, makes the drift problems even worse.) Nothing, however, will help you negotiate the mountain courses Iaka Hell, which are nothing but a cruel series of corkscrews. It's like driving a soap car on an ice track. Ironically, the computer opposition doesn't struggle with the very faults that handicap real live players.

In an effort to throw the gamer a bone,

the computer A.I. is so patronizingly scripted (watch as you pass the race leader who just a lap ago was beating you by a half mile), even victories feel hollow. It helps that you can jump online for a race, or merely to show off your tricked-out ride. But since the game's faults extend to every mode, online and off, dragging others into this mess is really just asking for a double helping of misery. It's a shame, because everything else about *Auto Modellista* is pretty much top-notch. If Capcom could get the handling right for a sequel, Sony and Namco could have a real problem on their hands. But this one's a disappointment. **B-**

—James Mielke

BETTER THAN DRIVING EMOTION TYPE-S
NOT AS GOOD AS APX
WAIT FOR IT GRAN TURISMO 4



→ Not since the days of the original Dynasty Warriors has the series seen one-on-one duels. Who needs their ass handed to them by hundreds of punks when one surly general will do? These encounters are tough, though, to your best bet is to opt out until your character is leveled up.

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4

IT TAKES A NATION OF MILLIONS TO HOLD US BACK. OH...WAIT.

TEEN | PS2

Fans of the *Dynasty Warriors* series have had a good winter. After all, only a few short months have passed since Koei unleashed *Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtreme Legends*. And though *Legends'* taste has yet to fade from the palate, it's time to pick up that poleaxe again. The dynasty warriors are back.

Keeping with the series' M.O., *DW4* thrusts gamers into ancient China as a general of one clan or another who must rally his troops to battle and topple the waves of opposing forces. Like the previous games, the fourth *Dynasty Warriors* throws hundreds of enemy soldiers (along with your own army) onscreen for you to get your war on with. Missions, though loosely based on historical events,

almost always devolve into finding and killing the opposing general. *DW4*'s big difference from previous games (besides the return of one-on-one duels) is the addition of strategic arsenal like battering rams, cannons, and elephants.

But while these features—along with the new weapon-upgrade system and wealth of tucked-away Easter eggs—are very nice, *DW4* suffers from being more of the same of, same of. The hundreds of enemies you fight are all very impressive, thanks, but they don't do much of anything until provoked. Koei should have considered trimming the number of dulleads standing around by a few dozen and instead used that sexy PS2 processing power to create smaller,

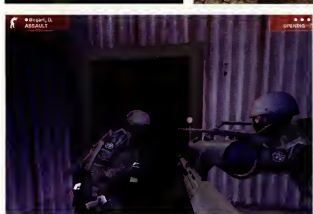
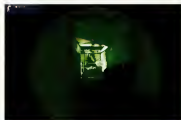
better-designed levels where you don't need to run around so much (something Koei's own *Mystic Heroes* did rather well). Imagine the leap a game like *Dead or Alive 2* made when it became 3, and you can see the potential being wasted here. Although nothing here is any worse than what's come before, *DW4* is the perfect example of a solid but well-worn formula that's beginning to stale. Time to shake up the status quo. **B-** James Mielke

GMR 6/10
BETTER THAN STATE OF EMERGENCY
NOT AS GOOD AS A REAL LIFE MUSH PIT
WAIT IT FOR IT: CHAOS LEGION

2ND. OPINION

Since I don't have as much experience behind the wheel as Mike, you know being a Chinese general, I'm not as fired on the handle concept. In my eyes *Dynasty Warriors 4* is a high-quality beat 'em up with just the right dash of strategy. You know, if you're into that sort of thing. **B+** David Chen

DEVELOPER: KOEI
PUBLISHER: BANDA NAMCO
PRICE: \$49.99
RELEASE: MARCH 2003
PLAYERS: 1-2
REGION: JAPAN



→ Rainbow Six, and Tom Clancy-branded games in general, have always been about the latest military hardware and gadgets. If you're a gun nut—and who isn't—you'll love replaying the levels with every possible combination of gun, silencer, grenade, flashbang, and other things that go boom.

RAINBOW SIX 3

IT'S ALL THAT IT CAN BE, WITH IMPROVEMENTS

TEEN | PC

PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT
DEVELOPER: UBI SOFT
PRICE: \$49.99
RELEASED: MARCH 2003
PLAYERS: 1-16
OS: WINDOWS

As a pioneer of the tactical first-person shooter genre, the *Rainbow Six* series has become a household name for gamers. So, needless to say, *Raven Shield* has a lot to live up to. Thankfully, this latest release hasn't lost any of the series' intense gameplay set in modern hot zones, or its sleek, high-tech weaponry and operations planning. But this time, Team Rainbow has the *Unreal 2* engine working for it, as well as kicked-up sound effects, an informative HUD that surveys the health and actions of team members, and realistic character movements. But it's the shiny A.I. upgrade that's the game's biggest improvement (though it's still not

perfect). Now, the A.I. takes command of a squad and babysits it when necessary. The combination of this improved A.I. with a new in-game command interface and waypoint system will remind *Rainbow* vets why nothing beats the feeling of being a badass in a team of badasses who all have each other's backs.

Of course, improvements come at a price. Expect the game to heavily tax even the fastest systems, and try not to bust a gut over the rag-doll effects. When the bones of a bad guy seem to disappear the instant someone shoots the fatal bullet (making the victim slowly fall into a heap that looks like Gumby having fun with himself), the game loses points for

realism. Disappointingly, the operation-planning interface hasn't evolved much from *Rogue Spear*, despite the addition of a viewing window that simulates each team's directives. Still, although *Raven Shield* sticks to its guns and stays with a familiar model, it offers enough notable improvements to make it worthwhile. For all you would-be anti-terrorist cells out there, that's got to count for something.

by Jeanne Kim Trais

GMR 8¹⁰
BETTER THAN: KID, COVERT STRIKE
NOT AS GOOD AS: SWAT 3
WAIT IF FOR IT: COUNTER-STRIKE, CONVICTION ZERO

2ND. OPINION

Rainbow Six still hasn't figured out how to bring its awesome realistic action to the casual gamer. It's just not accessible enough. Once they figure out how to give the game broad appeal without dumbing it down so much that the hardcore gringos lose interest, this game will be perfect. **B+**

—Tom Price



IKARUGA

INNOVATION AT THE EXPENSE OF JOY

EVERYONE | GC

➔ First things first: Props must be given to Atari and any company that, in this age of 3D excess, will publish a 2D shooter. Far from dead—and, in fact, about to enjoy quite the renaissance, thanks to the upcoming *Gradius* and *R-Type* games—the genre gets a much-needed breath of life thanks to the incoming *Ikaruga*.

As import-savvy gamers already know, this game is the spiritual successor to the Japan-only Saturn title *Radiant Silvergun*. The Ebay holy grail of 2D shooters (a copy typically sells for \$200), *Silvergun* combined a limited but well-balanced selection of weapons, RPG-like elements, a compelling story, and graphics that still hold their own against next-generation efforts like *Slipheed* (PS2).

While *Ikaruga* emulates *Silvergun*'s ship designs, the similarities end there; the ultra-streamlined combat engine (no power-ups or smart-bombs) is unlike anything we've played before. The game requires you to switch your ship from black to white at the touch of a button; if your ship is white, you can absorb the enemy's white shots (thus charging up for your special attack) but can be destroyed by black shots. Your own shots can twice as effectively destroy enemies of the opposite color, making for an innovative premise that, when applied to a 2D scrolling shooter,

elevates *Ikaruga* from the realm of traditional shooters. And therein lies the rub.

The best shooters give a gamer the ultimate ship and then pit him against endless waves of enemies. You know you're playing a great shooter when you find yourself "in the zone," instinctively gliding through hundreds of shots. It's ironic, then, that *Ikaruga*, as one of the best-looking blasters ever, makes it impossible to enjoy the sights: Against every shooter instinct in your body, you're always hurtling toward certain shots while trying to avoid others (and steering clear of enemy ships and solid background objects). It's a claustrophobic eye-dryer whose thrills are offset by the demands it places on the gamer. Innovative even when not compared to *Silvergun*, at heart, *Ikaruga* is a thoroughbred—an intense, no-nonsense shooter that's strictly for the hardcore, and only slightly worse for it. **C-**

James Mielke

FOR INFO	PRICE	\$29.99
DEV. TEAM	PLAYERS	1-2
REL. APRIL 2003	GENRE	SHOOTER

WORTH A SHOT

GMR 7¹⁰

BETTER THAN: RAISEN
NOT AS GOOD AS: THUNDERBOLT V
WAIT FOR IT: R-TYPE FINAL



TAOFENG: F.O.T.I.

HIT THE DECKS

MATURE | XBBOX

➔ *Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus*, Microsoft's new fighting game, confirms dear old mum's theory: Beauty is skin deep, and what's underneath oftentimes possesses the personality and grand appeal of a turnip. Sporting spiffy 3D graphics but little in the way of bang for the buck, *Tao Feng* quickly sinks into mediocrity and takes up permanent residence there.

The designers at Studio Gigante must have put in a good number of seconds—perhaps as many as eight—thinking about character names before going to lunch and letting a random-name generator come up with Pierce Tiger, Fiery Phoenix, Master Sage, and so on. It's perhaps absurd to criticize characters' names in a videogame, but with *Feng*, it's sort of revelatory. The people who made this game put as much effort into crafting believable heroes and villains as they did into fleshing out the combat itself—which is to say, not much.

Fighters' limbs can be weakened and damaged during fights, and this is *Feng*'s great contribution to the

genre. Sadly, it's just a gimmick; a fighter with a busted arm does reduced damage but can continue flailing away with it. Why not just make the arm useless—something quaint old *Zero Divide* did many years ago on the original PlayStation. Exaggerated Chi attacks allow players to inflict great pain, but the system is rather unbalanced. Some Chi strikes take such an inordinate amount of time to perform (and are thus easily countered) as to be nearly unusable, while others are practically instantaneous and almost indefensible. There's more to criticize, too, but it all just smacks of style over substance. Those who'd play *Tao Feng* would be better served a second helping of *Deadly Alliance*.

Greg Orlando

FOR INFO	PRICE	\$49.99
DEV. STUDIO GIGANTE	PLAYERS	1-2
REL. MARCH 2003	GENRE	FIGHTER

BETTER THAN: KUNIKU CHUNIN
NOT AS GOOD AS: MORTAL KOMBAT 9
WAIT FOR IT: SOUL CALIBUR II (XBOX)

GMR 4¹⁰



MOTOGP 3

GIVE THE KID A BRAKE. OR TWO

EVERYONE | PS2

It only took three tries, but finally, Namco's almost got it semi-perfect. The third incarnation of the gorgeous two-wheeled racer *MotoGP 3* marries high-octane speed with improved control, at long last implementing front and rear brakes.

Those who've never ridden a motorcycle may see this as a superfluous detail, preferring, illogically, the unbrake of *MotoGP's* past. But those who ride (or have ridden) a two-wheeled beast know that having front and rear brakes means the difference between staying upright and having an unsolicited tarmac snack. Successfully negotiating the bends in *MotoGP 3* in a realistic way requires skillful downshifting and specific brake management, but it's perfectly manageable with automatic transmission, too. It's still more difficult in the game than it is in real life to scrub off speed before entering a curve, but the disparity has been notably decreased.

Track selection is better, too. Namco's first *MotoGP* game for PS2 had five tracks; the second had 10. In keeping with this trend, *MotoGP 3* has

15. What's ridiculous about this? The real-life *MotoGP* circuit is composed of 16 tracks. Why Namco couldn't spring for the final track is bewildering (will *MotoGP 4* add the final, elusive track?), but admittedly, only true fans of the sport will notice and/or care.

Visually, the game is as sharp and stylish as ever, with a rock-steady framerate, beautiful bike and rider models, and a wicked sense of speed. The usual selection of time-based challenges is as tough and engaging as ever, and in a nod to the first game's unlockable Klonzo Easter egg, gamers can earn cool bonus characters like Mr. Drifter and Jack Slate. If that isn't worth the price of admission, then what is?

► **James Mielke**

POP. MARCH	PRICE: \$49.99
DEV. NAMCO	PLAYERS: 1-4
REL. MARCH 2003	GENRE: RACING

GMR 8¹⁰

BETTER THAN: RIDING SPIRITS
NOT AS GOOD AS: MOTOGP 2000
WAIT FOR IT: MOTOGP 2002



NASCAR RACING 2003

LEFT TURN, CLYDE

EVERYONE | PC

You may think NASCAR is hillbillies turning left, but the team of dedicated developers at Papyrus Racing has always taken the sport much more seriously.

The games in Papyrus' *NASCAR Racing* series are not just the best NASCAR-related games out there, they're also some of the best simulations period, always on the bleeding edge of photorealistic 3D graphics. Every *NASCAR Racing* installment has been nearly perfect and an improvement over the previous nearly perfect installment. Now comes the last game in the series for Papyrus, and the level of authenticity is through the roof. Surprisingly, the game is still very accessible to the less-experienced gamer.

There's not a lot like this new time around, but like any other sports game, *NASCAR Racing 2003* does feature

enough beyond the update to this year's Winston Cup teams and schedule to make this season's version worth purchasing. Everything—graphics, sound, driver A.I.—has been brushed up, albeit at a cost to your hardware specs. If you want to enjoy this game in all its graphical glory, you'd better have a top-end gaming PC and a decent racing wheel. A couple of tall boys, a bag of pork rinds, and the Shania Twain album, and the mutant wouldn't hurt, either. ► **Tom Price**

POP. VIDEOS UNIVERSAL	PRICE: \$49.99
DEV. PYPARUS RACING GAMES	PLAYERS: 1-2
REL. AUGUST 2003	GENRE: RACING

GMR 9¹⁰

BETTER THAN: NASCAR THUNDER
NOT AS GOOD AS: ACTUALLY RACING
WAIT FOR IT: PYPARUS TOP SECRET NEXT GAME



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COLIN MCRAE 3

ON THE ROAD AGAIN
EVERYONE | PS2 (REVIEWED) | XBOX | PC

➔ Seconds ago, I was punching the air in near-triumph. I may even have done a "dance."

Now, my middle finger is pressed against the TV screen, covering the name Lahkainen, and I'm screaming "Up yours, Mr. F***ing Finland!"

Such is the passion that *Colin McRae Rally 3* can instill in someone after they've slogged their way through three championship rallies on three continents, where the one constant is the name Lahkainen at the top of the rankings. Sometimes, he's a tantalizing half-second away, but mostly, he's a superhuman ten seconds ahead—thanks mainly to your attraction to roadside objects such as boulders, ditches, and trees.

A few hours later, the game's shine is ever so slightly coming off. I say slightly, because the superb graphics engine, spot-on car physics, and generally exciting tracks go a long way toward making *CMR3* a rally fan's dream and a truly accomplished game. There's nothing here that doesn't evoke the real rally experience. But that's where a problem lurks. It may be realistic to race as McRae in a Ford Focus in the

championship for a while, but for three seasons? With six rallies per season? With seven stages per rally? That's an awful lot of Ford Focus. Way too much—especially when, in the Single Race mode, I get to dissect corners with surgical precision in the barely legal Mitsubishi Evo VII. The stinky, dull early unlockables, like wet tires before rain stages [who hoo!], offer little incentive to plow through some truly grueling tracks.

That said, *CMR3* is still a prince amongst rally games, and it holds up well against newcomers such as *Rallispot Challenge*. But if Codies opened up the format and provided more variety in the Championship mode, it would be a king. **B+**

—Simon Cox

PRO: CHAMPIONSHIP
DEV: CIGAMSTARS
REL: AVAILABLE NOW
PRICE: \$49.99
PLAYERS: 1-2
OS: PC

GMR 8/10
RUGGED

BETTER THAN: GTC AFRICA
NOT AS GOOD AS: SEGA RALLY
WAIT FOR IT: RALLISPORT CHALLENGE 2



AMPLITUDE

PUMP UP THE VOLUME
TEEN | PS2

➔ The great moments in rock are numerous: There's the time Pete Townshend of The Who bonked author and civil-rights activist Abbie Hoffman on the head with his guitar at the mudslide known as Woodstock. There's the infamous date in Cleveland when Spinal Tap got lost and couldn't find the stage. A let's not forget the day sham artists in Milli Vanilli danced while the taped music didn't ding in the first place skipped in an endless loop. To this fine list, add another event: the time Joe Sixpack or Johnny Punchclock picks up the PlayStation 2 controller to rock out with the rhythm-panic game *Amplitude*.

Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast, quoth playwright William Congreve. A hip sequel to PlayStation 2's *Frequency*, *Amplitude* offers nothing but simple, addictive fun. Players control a three-pronged music blaster that streams over a series of colored bars; each bar represents an instrumental or vocal track and contains targets you must shoot to unlock. Hitting a target unlocks a track, and successfully blasting all the targets in a phrase earns you points and opens part of a song for a brief period. It's then possible to string together one track after another by unleashing a song's drum beat, bass, guitars, vocals, synthesizers, and so on—and you rack up impressive combo bonuses in the process.

The great fun here is in knocking off bars one after another, trying to get all the tracks playing at once to hear the complete song, and then striving to keep it going for its duration. The game is surprisingly immersive, thanks to an organic control set (three shoulder buttons are used to hit targets, the X button controls power-ups, and the analog sticks allow for some neat freestyling) and simple play mechanics; there's nothing yanking players out of the experience.

Cool music abounds here, and the 25 or so selections include old-school favorites David Bowie, Run DMC, and Herbie Hancock; pop icons Pink and Weezer; and thumping rockers Slipknot. Online play and the chance to remix the songs sweetens the honey-pot, and would-be DJs will find themselves repeatedly drawn to the game well after its trippy, overly busy MPEG-laden backgrounds produce Excedrin headaches. **No. 12 Rock on!** **B+**

—Greg Orlando

PRO: SODA
DEV: GAMING MUSIC SYSTEMS
REL: MARCH 2002
PRICE: \$49.99
PLAYERS: 1-4
OS: U.S.A.

GMR 8/10
BASS IN YOUR FACE

BETTER THAN: BIRTHYR'S DANCE BROT
NOT AS GOOD AS: SAMBA DE AMIGO
WAIT FOR IT: SPACE CHANNEL 5 (PS2)

STATE OF EMERGENCY STILL STUCK AT CONDITION YELLOW

NATURE | XBOX (REVIEWED) | PS2

➔ It's a port of a year-old game that wasn't very good to begin with. Why should you care? Good question. Vis has made some much-needed corrections and additions, like tweaked mission objectives, custom-soundtrack support, improved graphics, and a brand-new multiplayer option. All this for the reasonable retail price of \$19.99.

There's only one problem: *State of Emergency*'s still not a very fun game. Single-player missions start by asking you to do some pretty basic tasks. Go beat up that guy. Go beat up that other guy. Escort this guy over there, then beat up some other guy. It never really evolves beyond the point-to-point errand running through relatively small environments. The sheer number of crazed rioters running around seems impressive at first, but they don't really serve much purpose aside from ambient noise. The best reason to pick the game up, if you're trying really hard to find one, is the new multiplayer mode. Deathmatch is particularly fun, where bystanders don your colors and

roll down the boulevard looking for opposing gangs.

If you have three friends and 20 bucks, *State of Emergency* is an amusing short-term remedy for boredom. Just don't expect much of anything else. **B+**

—Andrew Plister

PC	BOXING	PRICE	\$19.99
DEV	10 ENTERTAINMENT	PLAYERS	1-4
REL	APRIL 2003	ORIGIN	U.S.A.

GMR ⁸₁₀ A LAUGH RIOT

BETTER THAN: FIGHTING FORCE
NOT AS GOOD AS: TWANSTY WARRIORS (WAIT FORCE ON PAR WITH A SCHOLARSHIP BRAWL)



BATTLEFIELD 1942: ROAD TO ROME FRENCH AND ITALIAN DRESSING

TEEN | PC

➔ *Battlefield 1942: Road to Rome* provides about as much fun as you can have online without setting off every bell and whistle in your adduct-center filtering software. It deservedly won multiple Game of the Year awards in 2002, thanks to its insanely addictive online play and solid net code. Now, its first expansion pack has landed on the beach, and what was already a fantastic game has been made even better.

How much better, you ask? As a rule, expansion packs should give the gamer enough content to justify the expense in the first place, but not as much as a full-fledged sequel. How much is enough is highly subjective, but *Road to Rome* feels like not quite enough. Don't get us wrong—this expansion is still a must-have, especially considering that its six new maps are some of the best we've ever encountered in a team-based multiplayer setup. But the new vehicles and factions (Italians and French—insert joke here) are little more than window dressing. Some new game

types would have been nice, but *Road to Rome* offers none beyond the originals. You will get enough to satisfy your battlefield cravings, but these extras could have—and maybe should have—been offered as a free download, not a \$17.99 purchase. **B+**

—Tom Price

PC	BA	PRICE	\$17.99
DEV	10 ORIGINAL ALLEGES	PLAYERS	1-32
REL	MARCH 2003	ORIGIN	U.S.A.

GMR ⁷₁₀ BANGIN'

BETTER THAN: MECHWARRIOR 4: INNER SPHERE
NOT AS GOOD AS: STARCRAFT: BROOD WAR
WAIT FOR IT: MEDIA OF HONOR: RISING SUN



FREELANCER WILL WORK FOR WARP-DRIVES

TEEN | PC

➔ It's the old standby in gaming and military recruitment: Travel to faraway places, meet interesting people, and kill them. Nowhere is this truer than in *Freelancer*, the long-awaited space sim from Microsoft.

In this great-looking game, you play a hotshot mercenary pilot involved in an interstellar war. The story uses various plot twists to guide you to dozens of star systems, all of which are alive with independently operating A.I. merchants, cops, and pirates. Flying and fighting in *Freelancer* is fast-paced and more accessible than in other sims. In fact, with an innovative mouse and keyboard interface, *Freelancer* often plays like a shooter.

While the story is useful for showing you around about half of the game's vast universe, it isn't particularly interesting. It's also a bit on the short side, with just 13 missions that amount to about 15 hours of game play. Luckily, there's plenty to do afterwards. The game is completely

open-ended, and randomly generated missions are available on most of the planets and bases you visit. This gives you the opportunity to earn more loot, buy better ships, level up, and play *Freelancer* like you would a game of *Diablo*. A multiplayer option lets you do the same with friends.

Freelancer is definitely a break from the norm for the space simulation genre. Hardcore fanatics may grouse about its simplistic flight model, mouse control, and repetitive missions, but for everyone else, it will provide endless hours of exploration, random violence, and, most important, fun. **B+**

—Du Lio

PC	MICROSOFT	PRICE	\$49.99
DEV	10 ORIGINAL	PLAYERS	1-32
REL	MARCH 2003	ORIGIN	U.S.A.

GMR ⁸₁₀ ORBITAL

BETTER THAN: X: BEYOND THE FRONTIER
NOT AS GOOD AS: INDEPENDENCE WAR 2
WAIT FOR IT: EVE—THE SECOND SINGING



SOUND ADVICE

WE KNOW MOST OF YOU HAVE EARS. SO LISTEN UP

YAMAHA RP-U200
TREAT YOURSELF TO AN AUDIOGASM

PS2 | XB0X | GC | PC | GBA | PS1

➔ In the world of professional recording equipment, Yamaha components are universally revered—particularly the company's speakers, with their ultra-clean sound, dynamic range, and tonal purity. This same quality finds its way into Yamaha's consumer-level products, like the upstanding RP-U200 (MSRP \$399.00), a versatile, multiplatform-friendly unit that defies the notion of a "PC sound system."

Since the system is extremely svelte, it makes a welcome guest in almost any gamer's audio-visual setup. But beneath the sexy silver facade lies a formidable wealth of inputs that will satisfy nearly any audio conundrum (one USB, three RCA, one CDAX, two optical-in jacks). The elegant interface on the front of the unit makes switching between sources a snap, but the key to the RP-U200's success doesn't stem from its looks or many inputs. This little guy's big draw is its big, accurate sound. When paired with wood-paneled NS-U50 speakers and a YST-SW105 subwoofer (or one of Yamaha's 5.1 packages), the RP-U200 sounds much bigger than its 20 watts per channel suggests. To be honest, this system is capable of more than simply providing the crunk for your *Counter-Strike* exploits. With both 5.1 and DTS support, coupled with sublime preset sound-shapes like Village Gate Jazz, the RP-U200 can form the core of any serious gamer's A/V system. **—James Mielke**

NOMAD JUKEBOX ZEN
KEEP ON ROCKIN' ME, BABY

➔ It's not easy trucking around your complete collection of *Final Fantasy I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X and XI* soundtracks (piano arrangements present and accounted for, sir!). We know this. We've been there. Plus, Discman and MD players break easily, discs get scratched, and batteries cost money and are bad for the baby bunnies and chipmunks of the world. What's a music-loving gamer to do?

Well, if you've got \$299.99 lying around (and who doesn't?), current wisdom suggests you grab a Nomad Jukebox Zen. Its massive 20GB hard drive can hold something like 14 dozen billion songs (or at least 8,000, which, last we checked, was a lot). That's all of your *Cowboy Bebop* soundtracks, your complete *Hootie and the Blowfish* collection (including B-sides and rare outtakes), and that natty old trance compilation Simon likes so much. Clocking in at nearly \$200 less than Apple's wee-bit-cuter 20GB iPod, the Zen has a few more buttons, a marginally larger case, and an initially perplexing interface. But its sturdy construction, purported 14-hour rechargeable Li-ion battery life (Hands-on road tests bring the battery life in at something slightly less than that), and ability to download songs from any PC give the Zen a definite charm that the competition can't quite match. We recommend upgrading to better headphones with the quickness, though, as the unit's sound isn't nearly punchy enough with the default set. That aside, this is an ace piece of gear and a significant value. **—James Mielke**

GMR CRISTALLINE 9¹⁰GMR JAMVIN 8¹⁰

SPLINTER CELL LIGHTS OUT

TEEN | PS2 (REVIEWED) | XBOX | GC | PC

➔ If you've been holding off on buying *Splinter Cell*, chances are you don't own an Xbox. With the exclusivity window now closed, the PS2 version you've waited for is here. And while the superb stealth gameplay escapes unscathed, the graphics aren't so lucky. Textures are muddier, the framerate is choppier, lighting effects are faded (faded well, but hey!), and the image quality isn't as clean. But *Splinter Cell* is still a great-looking and highly enjoyable game, and thanks to the additional PS2-exclusive features, this is a great alternative for gamers tired of *Metal Gear Solid*. **A-** *Andrew Plister*



PS2: \$39.99
XBOX: \$49.99
PC: \$49.99
GDC: \$49.99
RE: AVAILABLE NOW
FR: 000000
CANADA

GMR SNEAKY 8¹⁰

BETTER THAN: SPYGLASS FILTER
ON PAR WITH: METAL GEAR SOLID 2
WAIT FOR IT: METAL GEAR SOLID 2

MLB 2004 NO BALLS

EVERYONE | PS2

➔ *MLB 2004* is the last baseball game you'd want to play this season—unless, of course, you're related to a 989 Sports employee and you got a free copy. In that case, at least you haven't wasted your money. *MLB* misses on just about every cylinder. There's a freakishly convoluted franchise mode, sluggish pacing, lousy graphics, unbelievably broken A.I., a dull pitcher/batter interface, and very little else to suggest it's anything but a shabby representation of the grand old game. Better to spend the dough on a real-life double header. **C-** *Tom Price*



PS2: \$29.99
XBOX: \$29.99
PC: \$29.99
GDC: \$29.99
RE: MARCH 2003
FR: 000000
CANADA

GMR FRACTURED 4¹⁰

NOT AS GOOD AS: A BAT TO THE CHOPS
BETTER THAN: FASTBALL TO THE BRAIN
WAIT FOR IT: FOOTBALL SEASON

GODZILLA DESTROY ALL MONSTERS WHEN IN ROME...

TEEN | XBOX (REVIEWED) | GC

➔ If you're among the Xbox owners who looked at last year's GameCube lineup with jealousy when this Godzilla-themed brawler was released, stash thy envy now: The game is yours, and in improved form. Better graphics and more modes equals better value, as long as you don't mind the sluggish WWE-style controls, the suspect collision detection, or the lack of certain fan-favorite characters. It isn't a substitute for games like *Super Smash Bros.* or *War of the Monsters*, but considering the Xbox won't see either of those titles anytime soon, *Melee* will do just fine. **B-** *James Mielke*



PS2: \$29.99
XBOX: \$29.99
PC: \$29.99
GDC: \$29.99
RE: APRIL 2003
FR: 000000
CANADA

GMR BLOODHUNK 7¹⁰

NOT AS GOOD AS: WAR OF THE MONSTERS
BETTER THAN: MUND PUN CHAOS
WAIT FOR IT: BREAKDOWN



PRIMAL BASICALLY BORING

MATURE | PS2

➔ *Primal* has an identity problem. It's not really an action game—in fact, there's very little action to speak of. Most of the game is spent running around in pretty environments, occasionally stopping to kick over some pots or fight a pack of lumbering monsters. Actually, "fight" isn't the appropriate word. "Blindly stab" is more accurate. Combat is so clumsy, unresponsive, and repetitive, it almost seems like an afterthought. Even Jen's moves in her primal forms remain essentially the same as her human-form actions, and offer no discernable advantage. Fighting quickly becomes a chore to be avoided whenever possible.

Neither is *Primal* a puzzle game. Swapping between the two playable characters and getting them through areas and around various obstacles governs your progression through the game. Each character has different abilities. For example: Jen can fight and Scree can carry a torch. Why can't Jen carry a torch? We don't know. But that sort of arbitrary design makes all

the tasks seem artificially forced, doing away with any sense of in-game immersion. Why can't Jen use her animal strength to lift up gates? Why can Scree climb certain stone walls and not others? And why are there so damn many locked doors? In this game, you can only go where the developers want you to go, and you can only get there the way they want you to get there.

So, what kind of game is *Primal*? At best, it's yet another standard adventure game. At worst, it's a standard adventure game that wastes good graphics, competent voice acting, and an engaging plot. **C-** *Andrew Plister*

PS2: \$29.99
XBOX: \$29.99
PC: \$29.99
GDC: \$29.99
RE: MARCH 2003
FR: 000000
CANADA

GMR GARGOYLE 5¹⁰

BETTER THAN: WARRIORS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC
NOT AS GOOD AS: ETERNAL DARKNESS
EXCITING AS: RUNNING AROUND IN REAL LIFE





GMR
ESSENTIAL
SELECTION



NBA STREET VOL.2

MORE HOPS THAN ANHEUSER-BUSCH

EVERYONE | PS2 (REVIEWED) | XBOX | GC

Only two kinds of sports games exist in this world: simulation and arcade. While development teams struggle every year to capture basketball's nuances, court-side thrills, statistically accurate details, and high-flying heroics, more often than not, it's an arcade-inspired game that comes along and trumps those efforts.

In the beginning, or close to it, was NBA Jam, which, until *Acclaim* wrecked the series, was the defining arcade brawler/baller. Next came *Midway's NBA Showtime*. But neither Jam nor *Showtime* rule the court any more; *NBA Street* (particularly Vol. 2) is the new clown prince of hoops action.

Street boils down to an intense, ultra-pumped game of 3-on-3 action, with the first team to score 21 points winning (one point for normal shots, two for shots made behind the arc). *Street's* X-factor is the Gamebreaker shot that, if successful, subtracts a point from the opposing team's score while adding it to the shooting team's tally.

What keeps *Street* hot in any of its additive modes is its tight controls, great graphics, and awesome play-by-play commentary (you go, Bobbito!). A quick run through the painless tutorial brings you up to speed on the game's special moves and gets you ready for the main events.

Gamers will first want to explore the

Be A Legend mode, which takes your created player through a gauntlet of basketball's most famous cities (New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, etc.) and dishes out skill points for every win. Using these points to upgrade your baller from a no-skills chump to a virtual Vince Carter is crazy fun, and when the character is used to form a custom team's core, which you then put through the NBA Challenge, *Street* is practically flawless. Progression in this mode—against real NBA teams and players—rewards you with secret characters (like Nelly), retro jerseys and players, and other super-slick Easter eggs. *Street's* only drawback (besides lack of online play) is its quick transitions; the controls make switching to the desired defensive player troublesome (imagine trying to block Shaq while you're stuck with Jason Kidd). Besides that gassy little burp, this is the best b-ball game you'll play all year. **For** James Mielke

PS2 \$4
XBOX \$4
GC \$4
RELEASING
MARCH 2002

GMR
SLAMMIN'
9/10

BETTER THAN: NBA JAM ANY VERSION
NOT AS GOOD AS: SEASON TICKETS TO KNOCKS GAMES
WANT FOR IT: SACRAMENTO TO CREAM LOS ANGELES

CASINO INC. HIGH ROLLIN'

MATURE | PC

The problem with tycoon-style games—outside the fact that they appeal mostly to control-freaks, spreadsheet nerds, and other middle manager types—is that they tend to be overdesigned. The more features and details put into a sim, the more there is for the player to keep track of and micromanage. Things can quickly get out of control, which is the main problem playing *Casino Inc.*, an otherwise clever and funny tycoon game that puts you in the shoes of a casino owner.

Unlike other like games, *Casino Inc.* expands your range beyond the walls of your building, incorporating the entire city in which your casino resides. You must compete with other casinos and attractions in your neighborhood by offering more than just gambling—bars, nightclubs, arcades, etc.—and advertising around town with billboards. *Casino Inc.* also takes a note from *The Sims* by giving individuals, both customers and employees, complex personalities you must cater to.

Casino Inc. is a kick for awhile, but it

quickly becomes unmanageable. You can manage as many as eight casinos at once, but cleaning up all the puke, busting all the cheaters, and keeping all the hookers happy in just one house of cards will have you running around like a mobbed-up businessman with his head cut off. **For** Tom Price

PC \$39
XBOX \$39
RELEASING
MARCH 2002

GMR
SNAKE EYES
6/10

BETTER THAN: CASINO TYCOON
NOT AS GOOD AS: THE SIMS
WANT FOR IT: OCEAN'S 11



IGI 2: COVERT STRIKE

I'M GOING IN... PLEASE LET ME OUT

MATURE | PC

We're not sure if *IGI 2: Covert Strike* drags down the entire overcrowded genre of stealth/infiltration shooters, or just makes games like *Splinter Cell* and *Rainbow Six* look that much better by comparison. What we do know is that *IGI 2* is incredibly dull and uninspired, full of weird A.I. behaviors, bad graphics, and crushingly boring environments. In other words: We played this game so you don't have to.

IGI 2 has you creeping through warehouses, factories, military bases... pretty much anywhere you'll find lots of crates and irritatingly screechy alarms. It's supposed to be realistic, and those are realistically the kinds of places you'd be sneaking into if you were one of the lone-wolf commandos so popular in games these days, but the antiquated-looking engine doesn't make for very interesting scenery. On top of that, the bad guys do weird things like shooting at you with a shotgun from half a mile away—or they're dead already because with a Mac-10 from the same distance. Dumb-looking

special effects—like thermal vision that allows you to see a human body (98°F) on the other side of a wall, but not the wood-burning stove (a bunch more °F) he's standing next to—are just another indication of the sloppy design and inattention to detail that make *IGI 2* one to avoid. **For** Tom Price

PC \$39
XBOX \$39
RELEASING
MARCH 2002

GMR
STOMACH WOUND
2/10

BETTER THAN: IGI
NOT AS GOOD AS: THE
WANT FOR IT: SPLINTER CELL ON THE PC





GBA REVIEWS

AT GMA, WE REALIZE THAT—SOMETIMES—THE BIGGEST SURPRISES OFTEN ARRIVE IN THE LITTLEST PACKAGES



GOLDEN SUN: THE LOST AGE

THE SECOND SUN RISES WHERE THE FIRST ONE SET

TEEN | GBA

➔ *Golden Sun: The Lost Age* should be listed in the course manual with the stern warning, "Prerequisite: Student must have completed the original *Golden Sun*." Seriously, if you haven't finished the first installment of Camelot's sprawling GBA epic, it's likely you'll be baffled, at least initially, by this direct follow-up. *Lost Age* immediately thrusts you into events happening more moments after the conclusion of the original *Golden Sun*, prompting such questions as: a) Who are these people? b) What are they doing? and c) Why do their heads jiggle when they talk? Even intrepid questers who beat *GS* will beg for a refresher course, since the plot isn't that memorable to begin with.

Luckily, every aspect of the game outside its narrative succeeds without fault. The gameplay perfectly balances combat and exploration; random encounters are quick-and-easy turn-based fare, while a bevy of puzzle-packed dungeons provide the game's real draw. Too many RPGs use overlong battles to pad out the experience, so it's refreshing to play one that employs fun, creative challenges as the meat of its gameplay. A hefty arsenal of Psynergy skills pumps up the variety, so you'll be psychically creating rope bridges, forging ice platforms, reading peoples' minds, and employing tons of other crazy powers to solve various fiendish riddles. A note to the puzzling-impaired: You might seriously consider investing

in a hint book (or a good FAQ) before tackling *Lost Age*.

Overall, *Lost Age* is a solid sequel. Linking it so closely to the previous game hurts the narrative impact, but it's an otherwise excellent RPG packed with more of the same solid gameplay that made its predecessor a deserved hit. **C+—Shane Bettenhausen**

FOR ENGLISH	BY SQUARE	DEV. SQA
BY CAMELOT	BY SQUARE	BY SQUARE
BY SQUARE	BY SQUARE	BY SQUARE

GMR 8/10

BETTER THAN: GOLDEN SUN
NOT AS GOOD AS: WINNING LOTTO
WAIT FOR IT: FINAL FANTASY TACTICS ADVANCE

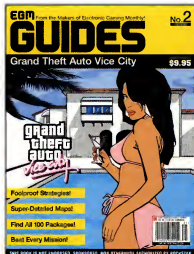


➔ If you want to truly rule the battlefield in *Golden Sun*, do your best to capture all the Djinn hiding across the land. These magical critters harness powerful elemental magic, and equipping them to your party members significantly raises their stats. Also, you can summon them in the heat of battle to rain fiery destruction upon your enemies.



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THIS MONTH IN MORE

NBA STREET VOL. 2

078

→We'll show you how to play the street game. How to talk it is up to you

COMMAND & CONQUER: GENERALS

080

→Tommy Franks ain't got nothin' on this

BATTLEFIELD 1942: ROAD TO ROME

082

→Love is a battlefield. So were Germany, France, and Italy

TOP 10 TIPS: AL

084

→The honorable ninja does not cheat

SCREEN

086

→When Harry Met Hannibal

RETROACTIVE

088

→Incredible Crisis, Poy Poy, TurboGrafx-16, GMR Treasure Hunter

THE LIST

090

→Rated for your pleasure

GAME GEEZER

098

→Back in his day, they didn't even have colors



MORE 



NBA STREET VOL. 2

TEARRIN' UP THE ASPHALT

WANT TO BEAT THE NEW *STREET*? WE GUIDE YOU THROUGH FINISHING THE GAME WITH ALL KINDS OF FLAVOR, EARNING THE MAD RESPECT. OR, YOU KNOW, WHATEVER.

NEW YORK BLOCK EXCHANGE

Whether you call it feedin' em a Spalding burger, rejecting their weak-ass shot, or layin' the smacketh down, it's all trash talk for the same basic element: blocking. And it's a huge part of Vol. 2. To block or be blocked, that is the question. Here's how to do it and how to avoid eating ball.



BLOCK PARTY

- There are five master blocksmen (in order of blocksmanship): Wilt Chamberlain, Shaquille O'Neal, Bill Russell, Ben Wallace, and Yao Ming. The first four of these five combo Power and Blocks. Yao fits in because he's a block talent plus he's 11 feet tall.
- When D'ing up, take your tallest baller (preferably one of the guys above) and keep him on the edges of the lane. You'll control the inside game that way, and if anyone comes into your house, remind them that it's, yep, your house.
- Hold down two Turbos while controlling your behemoth and you'll do the Super Block. Problem is, it saps your Turbo in a hurry. The real trick is to hold the two Turbo buttons and press Triangle, then let go of the Turbos. The original block attempt will cut your Turbo in half, but if you keep pointlessly holding, it'll keep draining.
- If you pull down a Super Block, pass out of it immediately. One of your guards will break, and you'll get an easy layup.

STOMPING THE BIG MEN

- If you're high-flying ready to dunk with Iverson vs. Wilt, press Circle a second time and you'll transition to a layup. Otherwise, you'll be on your rump.
- Go after the biggest blocker on the team by using a special dribble to knock him down. Because of his low Handle rating, he can't deal with it, and you'll have a lane to the net.
- Pump fake. If they don't go up, pass, pump fake, then shoot. Going in close on a guy with a High Power rating, even when he's faked out, might still dump you on your drawers.
- If you want to attack the hoop, get their big man out of position. Either pass to the weak side or get him picked by pressing R3.

HEAD CASE

Ready to light up your Gamebreaker like Christmas in New York? There's one move to master: Off the Heezay.



- Run up the court with your best Handles man...
- ...but don't use Turbo.
- Break off a Turbo special dribble and knock down your defender.
- Hold two Turbo buttons and press X to pass the ball off of his head back to yourself.
- Do it again.
- And again.
- And again.

- Then cut to the hoop and get dunkadelic. Your Gamebreaker meter will soar.

STOPPING THE HEADACHE

- If someone keeps popping the ball off your lid with Off the Heezay, run for it. After one or two, you'll inch far enough away, the ball will be passed to nowhere and you can pick it up.
- If you can, right off the bat, use a Trick Counter to stop them. But if that doesn't fly, run.

CAN YOU HANDLE THIS?

Having a hot handle is like having a Dr. J Mitchell & Ness jersey: instant respect. So, how to keep it rolling, and how do you stop it?



DOUBLE ORIBBLE

- If someone's using the Trick Counter to stop you, fool them by not doing any special moves. While they're waving their arms, speed past them for an easy bucket.

STOP THE BOUNCE

- Stopping mad Handle isn't all about using two Turbos and Square for a Trick Counter. It's about position. If you see a move coming, back up, then dive in with Square and Square only. The Trick Counter's great if your opponent is trick obsessed, but otherwise, the common steal will do wonders.

CHEAT STREET

- Want to unlock the phattest jerseys and ballers, but don't want to work your way through all of the game modes? Try this.
- Go to Play It, then to Pick Up Game.
- Choose a name for yourself and choose your team.

- At My Rules, spot yourself 20 points and play to 21.
- Score one bucket and you'll win.
- Every time you win five games in a row, you'll unlock some goodies.

TIMELESS MATCHUP



- Don't know who to take for the consummate old-school vs. new-school matchup? We've got you. New school: Shaq, Iverson/Kobe, C-Webb. Old school: Wilt, Pistol Pete/Bill Russell, Jordan.

LOVE THE GAME



- There's plenty of reason to hustle your way through both the NBA Challenge and the Be A Legend mode. Beat the NBA Challenge against Dr. J's crew and you'll unlock the coolest of the cool: Rucker Park '78. But when you beat everything, you get the sweetest reward: a third Jordan. From 1985, the one that won all of those dunk contests! 14

XB

PS2

GC



COMMAND & CONQUER: GENERALS

A QUICK BRIEFING ON HOW TO COMMAND, THEN CONQUER



COMMON RULES FOR ALL SIDES

➔ 1. INTELLIGENCE

No general can make wise decisions without accurate information. The GLA and Chinese don't start with radars, so their minimap is disabled. You should remedy this as quickly as possible by building radars. Also, make use of fast, stealthy units to locate resources and act as spotters.

➔ 2. LOGISTICS

All things being equal, *Generals* is a game of numbers. The side with the most firepower wins, and this usually depends on having the most money. Never be satisfied with one supply center and one supply unit. Always have an assembly line where there are multiple supply units. Take control of forward

supply centers by building defensive weaponry near them, and don't neglect to capture oil derricks.

➔ 3. SECURITY

With generals' abilities like Rebel Ambush and Para Drops, enemies can easily strike behind your lines. Try to maintain a strategic reserve for these emergencies, and make sure you have stealth-detection units to counter infiltrators. Nothing can ruin your day faster than a nasty spy planting remote-controlled bombs on all your power generators.

INDIVIDUAL SIDES

➔ 1. U.S.A.

There's no match for the versatility and effectiveness of U.S.

equipment. It's fast and powerful, capable of quickly bringing overwhelming firepower to any area. These units are expensive, however, and care should be taken in their use. Here are some tips for specific units:

Chinooks: These tough helicopters have dual roles: supply gathering and transport. Don't be afraid of sending your Chinooks to raid supply sources behind enemy lines, as long as they're safe from anti-air units. You also shouldn't forget their combat drop abilities. You can cause horrendous damage to your enemy by dropping a half-dozen tanks and infantry behind his lines to destroy vulnerable buildings like power plants.

Humvees: These fast and lightly armored vehicles can be deadly. Give them the TOW Missile upgrade and pack them full of missile defenders. Everyone inside adds their firepower to the

Humvee, making it more powerful than most tanks. These are great for scouting, raids, and rushes. Just don't forget to retreat when damaged, since everyone inside dies if the Humvee blows up.

Air Units: Don't be overconfident about your air units. Enemy AA units like Quad cannons, SAM sites, and Gatling cannons can make mincemeat of your planes. Always use abilities like A-10 strikes, or artillery bombardments with your Tomahawks on enemy AA positions, before calling in the flyboys.

➔ 2. CHINA

What the Chinese units lack in sophistication, they make up for with brute strength. Their tanks are ponderous but can put out vast amounts of firepower. Their nuclear missiles are also the most powerful of the special weapons. They must take note of the following factors to triumph:

Defense: China's initial units are weak; only later in the tech tree can they stand up against the opposing nations. To prevail, make use of the powerful Gatling cannons and build bunkers next to them. Fill the bunkers with tank hunters to fight incoming armor; the Gatling cannons will take care of incoming soft targets and air units.

Propaganda: When you can build Overlord tanks, always upgrade at least one in every attacking force with a propaganda tower. This adds to the fighting ability of your units and acts as a mobile repair base. A squadron of Overlord tanks backed up by a Self-healing ability is nearly indestructible.

Human Waves: Some Chinese units gain a Horde bonus when they're near a large number of their comrades. This can be very useful for an early rush. Chinese barracks produce two Red

Guards for the price of one and you can quickly build up a large group of these if you have multiple barracks. For even more firepower, use your general's ability to make them veterans.



3. GLA

GLA units are cheap, but they lack the firepower for a toe-to-toe slugfest against another faction. There are some ways to even up the odds.

Stealth: The Camouflage ability is one of the most powerful upgrades in the game. It hides all your infantry as long as they aren't moving or shooting, allowing you to set up devastating ambushes. The Chinese are especially vulnerable, since they don't have very good stealth-detection capabilities. You should also remember that your hero, Jarmen Kell, can kill enemy vehicles with one shot while hiding. Save this

ability for expensive enemy units like Overlords, since it takes a long time to recharge.

Quad Cannon: Always have a few of these around. They aren't as powerful as the SAM sites for anti-air attacks, but they're mobile and very effective against enemy infantry. Give them the Armor Piercing upgrade and a few salvaged parts, and they'll even put up a decent fight against enemy armor.

Rocket Buggy: These units have the lasting power of the French, but they pack a lot of firepower in their thin shell. Faster than any other ground unit, they're great for hit-and-run raids. They are also very useful for taking out enemy fortifications from a distance, since they're able to go in and get out before the enemy can respond. Use these instead of the cumbersome SCUD launchers for siege work. **14**



→ The Art of War: Know your strengths and weaknesses, then formulate your battle plan based on what you can and cannot do.



BATTLEFIELD 1942: ROAD TO ROME

THE SCENIC WAR ZONES OF ITALY



➔ If you've been trying to wrap your mind around the new *BF1942: Road to Rome* maps, but keep getting sniped, bombed, run over, or otherwise ended, we can help. Please enjoy this travelogue of the Italian sites and the people you will kill there.

BATTLE FOR ANZIO

➔ A scout/artillery team can be devastatingly effective on this hilly map. The player controlling the artillery piece should hide behind the hills near his starting base somewhere close to an ammo supply. The scout then moves to the top of any of the hills in the middle of the battlefield, from which he should have a clear view of almost the entire map. The main road and the river that cut through Anzio are easy to navigate, but tend to be heavily guarded. Don't be afraid to break trail! There are lots of navigable paths through the hills that can help you deliver a nasty surprise to the fascists, or, if you're accidentally playing on the Italian side, get a cheap kill on the good guys. **1E**



➔ That tank on the left is one of the new Italian jobs featured in *Road to Rome*. Not that the Italians were known for their tanks. It's funny that the two new factions, the Italians and French, aren't pitted against each other, that's because it would just be a race to see who surrendered faster.



OPERATION BAYTOWN

➔ Either side can parachute behind enemy lines. Once there, take the rearmost flag and then work your way down the hill. If you can hold both high-ground bases, you'll make life difficult for the enemy. The lower two bases are the hardest to control, so concentrate on the high ground. Avoid the middle island, it's a meat grinder. This is another map in which artillery is incredibly effective, since it reaches both sides of the battlefield. **1E**

FLAK ATTACK

Antiaircraft guns have been seriously nerfed in the latest update. Mounted machine guns are now the most consistently effective weapon for downing planes, and they're good against soft targets as well. And by soft targets, we mean the French. Man, it's so easy to make fun of the frogs!



➔ What many people don't know is that Mussolini, after making the trains run on time, was going to bring satellite TV to Tuscany.

MONTE SANTE CROCE

➔ With its main road winding through plenty of cover-providing terrain, this map is tailor-made for a two-man Assault/Antitank team. Hide in one of the of nooks beside the road, wait for an enemy tank to rumble by, and then jump out and plant a few rockets up its fragile ass end. With the assault player protecting the antitank guy, and by switching hidey-holes regularly, a good team can rack up a scary number of tank kills. This is probably *Road to Rome*'s most fluid, chaotic map. Flag ownership changes constantly, so don't be afraid to play a little defense! **1E**





→ Calling in artillery on enemy positions is integral to a good Battlefield match. Just don't get caught holding your binoculars.

➔ MONTE CASSINO

The hapless French need all the help they can get, so this map's strategy is dedicated entirely to them. First, pick the engineer class. Hugging the outskirts of the battlefield, make your way to the Germans' home base, a ruined church at the far end of the map. Grab one of the two capture points, place a few demo packs, and then hide. When the Germans come to retake the flag, set off the charges to separate some Teutonic legs from their Teutons, but, otherwise, stay hidden. As long as you're not actively pelting them with bullets, people generally assume that all explosives have been planted by magical demolition fairies, and they tend to not investigate any further. This mysterious psychological blind spot should permit you to retake the flag several times before anyone catches on to your little game. This tactic works well on all the maps. ☛

DRIVE BY

The main cannon on the new tanks—including the awesomely named German SturmGeschütz—can rotate through only a limited 90-120 degree arc. This makes the old tanks with 360 degree fields of fire, such as the Allied M10 Wolverine on Husky, great for rushing past an enemy tank (rotating your turret as you go), and then spraying the opposing vehicle with shells while its driver makes a frantic attempt to bring you back into view.

➔ OPERATION HUSKY

As long as a side has a flag, their tickets won't count down, making this the most defensively oriented map of the bunch. Be methodical—move the front forward one flag at a time. Though if you hotheads don't want to take our advice on that, about halfway between the second and third flag from the beach is an unmarked path over the hills that gives the allies quick access to the rear flags. The Axis should keep an engineer guarding the artillery at the third flag. Almost by itself, this artillery can keep the beach clear of Allies. Make sure to press this advantage by crowding the beach with tanks. In order to counter the Axis beach assault, the Allies must utilize ship artillery to wipe the beach clean of its Italian stain. It's imperative for the Allies to quickly land scouts to act as spotters for the ship's big guns. ☛



→ The only way a British soldier is going to be flying over the Operation Husky mission is in a stolen plane. It's those dumb bastards fault for leaving the keys under the visor.

➔ BATTLE FOR SALERNO

The base in the middle of the map is important to hold. Unfortunately, since you can't spawn at this middle base, the key to its successful attack or defense is holding one, or, preferably, both, of the two spawnable bases around its perimeter. Concentrate on grabbing these bases before even worrying about the central capture point. ☛





A.I.

HIS CODES ARE REAL. BUT HE IS NOT



01 TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN PS2

➔ One of the coolest games to hit PS2 in a long time has a collection of codes for players who can't tell the difference between a white crane and a praying mantis.

Full health

Pause the game, then press Up, Down, Right, Left, Square, Square, Square.

Unlock all items

At the Item Select screen, hold L1 and R1, then press Up, Square, Square, Left, Square, Square, Down, Square, Square, Right, Square, Square.

Increase each item by 10

At the Item Select screen, hold L2 and R2, then press Square, Square, Square, Up, Left, Down, Right.

Unlock all characters

At the Title screen, press L1, R2, L2, R1, Right, Left, L3, R3.

Unlock all missions

At the Mission Select screen, press L1, R1, L2, R2, Right, Square, L3, R3.

Unlock the B-side

At the Title screen, hold L1 and R2, then press Down, Square, Up, Square, Right, Square, Left, Square.

Unlock the demo

At the Title screen, press Up, Down, Right, Left, X, X, X.

Unlock all layouts

At the Mission Select screen, press R3, L3, R2, L2, R1, L1.

02 WAY OF THE SAMURAI PS2



➔ If Way of the Samurai has you wanting to commit seppuku, use the codes below and enslave all of feudal Japan instead.

Restore health

Pause the game, hold L1 and L2, then press Down, Up, Down, Up, Right, Left, Circle. This doesn't work in Versus mode [cheater].

Increase sword durability

Pause the game, hold R1 and R2, then press Right, Right, Left, Left, Down, Up, Circle. This can be done five times for maximum durability.

All sword skills

Pause the game in Versus mode, hold R1, then press R2, R2, L1, L1, L2, and L2. Release R1 and press R2.

Battle mode

At the Title screen, hold L1 and R1, then press Circle and Square simultaneously.

03 ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY GC/PS2



➔ Activate Cheat mode:

For GameCube, go to the Main Menu and:

Hold L + R + Z and press Left, Up, Down, A, Right, B, and Start.

For Xbox, go to Main Menu, select New Game, and then:

Hold L + R and press Left, Up, Down, A, Right, B, and Start.

For PS2, go to the Main Menu, then: Hold L1 + R1 and press Left, Up, Down, X, Right, Triangle, and Start.

Invincibility

SUPERMECH

Unlock all multiplayer levels

MULTIMAYHEM

Gunpod ammo refreshes quickly

SPACEFOLD

Missiles refresh quickly

MARSBASE

Gunpod and missiles refresh quickly

MIRIYA

One-shot kills

BACKSTABBER

One-shot kills in Sniper mode

SNIPER

Unlock new paint schemes

MISSMACROSS

Unlock all levels

WEWILLWIN

Unlock all models and awards

WHERESMAX

Game becomes upside down

FLIPSIDE

04 REIGN OF FIRE PS2



➔ If the dragons in Reign of Fire are turning you to ash, fret not. Enter the level select code at the Main menu, and enter the other codes turning gameplay.

Level select

Up, Left, Circle, Circle, Left, Left, Square, Down, Up, Circle

Level skip

Square, Triangle, Left, Down, Right, Triangle, Right, Up, X

Invincibility

X, Triangle, Right, Left, Circle, Up, Down, Down, Right, Circle, Circle

Extra damage

X, Triangle, Right, Up, Right, Triangle, Circle, Right

Burn everything

Square, Triangle, Left, Down, Square, Circle

Goat mode

Triangle, Right, Left, Left, Circle, Triangle, Square, Right, Up

05 GODZILLA: DESTROY ALL MONSTERS MELEE GC



➔ Just when you thought War of the Monsters had the corner on the destruction market, Infogrames comes through with an arsenal of its own. To activate the Cheat mode, go to the Title screen and press and hold **L, B, and R** (in that order). Then, release **B**, then **R**, then **L**.

To unlocks:

Destroyah
Gigan
Godzilla 2000
King Ghidrah
Mecha Godzilla
Mecha King Ghidrah
Orga
Rodan
Technicolor mode
Black and White mode
Smog mode
11 continues in Adventure mode
All cities
Indestructible buildings
Everything is throwable

Enter code:

537084
614233
225133
877447
131008
557456
202412
104332
661334
567980
913943
760611
480148
112112
756287

06 MARVEL VS. CAPCOM 2 PS2



➔ Unlock every character, costume, and art gallery to be able to select the same character more than once. For example, you could have six Zangieffs onscreen at once, or three Ryus performing a super combo against a team of three Paylocks (six-character Sentinel battles are a blast). If you're having difficulty earning enough points, set the game to **Training mode** (be sure it's not on pause) and go see a movie. You'll earn 10 points per minute (600 an hour) up to a total of 9,999 points. Buy characters, artwork, and costumes; save the game; and repeat.

07 STATE OF EMERGENCY PS2



➔ If you want to give some of the old ultraviolence new life, enter these codes:

Invincibility

L1, L2, R1, R2, X

Unlimited ammunition

L1, L2, R1, R2, Triangle. You must be unarmed while you enter the code.

All weapons

L1, L1, R1, R2, X

Mission skip

Left, Left, Left, Left, Triangle

Mission select

L1, L2, L2, L2, L2, L1, X

Punches decapitate

L1, L2, R1, R2, Square

08 TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER GC



➔ Now, GameCube owners can try their paw at immortality.

Invincibility

Left, Right, Left, Right, Y, Y, Y, X, X, X

Instant Aquarang, Elemental

Boomerangs, Dive, and Swim abilities

During gameplay, press Left, Right, Left,

Right, Y, Y, B, B, Y, B.

Instant Technorangs

During gameplay, press Left, Right, Left,

Right, Y, Y, Y, B, Y, B.

09 TWIN CALIBER PS2



➔ Need more ammunition or a heart that pumps blood even when it has taken a shotgun blast at point-blank range? These codes must be entered at every new level during gameplay.

Invincibility

Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, Down, Right,

Up, Left, Down

Unlimited ammunition

Left, Right, Up, Right, Down, Down,

Right, Up, Left, Down

10 TEKKEN 4 PS2



➔ If you've had trouble unlocking Tekken 4's many additional characters, check out the requirements below.

Win Story mode with:

Hwoarang
Christie
Xiaoyou
Yoshimitsu
Bryan
Violet
Kazuya
Nina
Marduk, Paul, or Law

To unlock:

Jin Kazama
Eddy Gordo
Kuma/Panda/Miharu
Bryan Fury
Violet
Comboto
Nina
Lei
Hiehachi

Once you've beaten Story mode with the appropriate character, there's a bit more work to be done to select your new fighter:

Panda

Highlight Kuma at the Character Selection screen and press either **Triangle** or **Circle**.

Eddy Gordo

Highlight Christie at the Character Selection screen and press **Triangle**.

Miharu

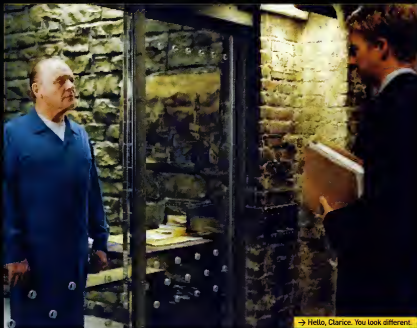
Highlight Ling Xiaoyou at the Character Selection screen and press **Circle**.

Violet

Highlight Lee at the Character Selection screen and press **Circle**.

SCREEN

HANNIBAL, HARRY, AND A VIDEOGAME MOVIE THAT SUCKS MORE THAN STREET FIGHTER



→ Hello, Clarice. You look different.



→ Jean Paul Gualtier's new spring line.

RED DRAGON

LET'S PRETEND HANNIBAL NEVER EXISTED.


➔ It's hard not to compare *Red Dragon* to the movie it prequels (*Silence of the Lambs*), and to the movie of which it is essentially a remake (*Manhunter*). Those films created big shoes to fill. But *Red Dragon* does not disappoint.

With style and suspense, director Brett Ratner (*Rush Hour 2*) brings to the screen the story of the search for a serial killer known as the Tooth Fairy. A heavyweight cast including Anthony Hopkins, Edward Norton, Ralph Fiennes, Harvey

Kitel, and Emily Watson deliver both subtle character work and edge-of-your-seat thrills. It seems an impossible task to upstage Hopkins' Hannibal Lecter—surely the creepiest bad guy ever filmed—but Fiennes as Francis Dolarhyde delivers an extreme portrait of a tortured guy with a lot of issues.

Red Dragon covers some familiar ground: an incarcerated, brilliant madman assisting the FBI with a case; a nicknamed murderer committing appalling crimes; an agent with emotional

baggage. But *Red Dragon* goes beyond being just another movie in the series, with great pacing, atmospheric build-up of tension, deft camera work, and, without a doubt, some of the best acting in this series of movies.

Special features include numerous deleted, extended, and alternate scenes; Anthony Hopkins talking about Hannibal Lecter; a making-of documentary; and FBI profiler John Douglas explains his craft in "Inside the Mind of a Serial Killer." Like, creepy. 



→ Quidditch—another way of saying “grab my broomstick.”

HOUSE OF THE DEAD

THE MOVIE THEY'LL SHOW IN HELL



→ So, Bill, were the 5 mores really worth it?



HARRY POTTER

AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT

➔ The first *Harry Potter* movie was an exhilarating, playful ride, and Chris Columbus (who directed both *Potter* films) knows we want more of the same. In *Chamber*, we get it. A lot of it. It's a new year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and Harry, ignoring a warning not to return, is back in class and back on the trail of some dark funny-business. His partners in crime, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, are back, too (because three well-intentioned troublemakers are always better than one), along with the teachers and staff of Hogwarts, including the larger-than-life Hagrid (played by the larger-than-life Robbie Coltrane). One welcome new arrival is Kenneth Branagh, who delights in his role as

teacher of Defense Against the Dark Arts, Gilderoy Lockhart.

When a mysterious force starts turning students to stone, and Harry begins hearing strange voices from the walls, our intrepid threesome set out to solve the riddle of the titular chamber. On the way to the finale, there are thrills (another astonishing Quidditch game), scares (two words: giant spiders), and plenty of laughs—not to mention special-effects work that just keeps getting better.

Special features: There's a second disc devoted to special features, including countless scenes that didn't make it into the movie. Interviews with cast members, tours of stores and locations, and DVD-ROM features such as games and screensavers. **14**



→ Jesus does not endorse this movie, and Jesus likes lots of things.

➔ You know you're about to see a low-budget film when the guy at the door checking for cameras is the guy who directed the movie. Such was the case with Uwe Boll at the premiere of the awesomely terrible *House of the Dead*.

Delicately blending the sensibility of a skin flick with the sensitivity of *Spit on Your Grave*, *House* drops a bunch of no-names onto an island—not just any island, mind you, but La Isla del Muerte, The Island of the Dead!—for some shoot-em-up action. The film's cast is anchored by Juergen Prochnow (*Das Boot*), who shows great versatility, alternately looking pensive while smoking in the rain or looking pensive while smoking in the rain and shooting zombies. Ron Howard's untalented brother Clint plays the seaman Salish, and generally, he wears his raincoat very well. As for horror, well, the only real horror here is realizing you may have paid to watch this bird and you'll never get those two hours back.

Lest you forget that you're watching a movie about a videogame, Boll reminds you every 10 seconds or so by flashing game footage onscreen. More action-oriented than genuinely scary, *House* does feature several knock-down moments in which beleaguered humans shoot guns aplenty at the evil dead. Here, Boll goes full-out with the dramatic cuts and pans, special effects, and slow-motion shots. An undeniable energy pulses through these scenes, but they don't redeem the movie, much like a quarter stuck into a piece of dog feces does not make the feces worth examining. **14**

HOUSE OF THE DEAD: 11 BRIGHTLIGHT PICTURES 12 DIRECTOR UWE BOLL 13 STARS JUERGEN PROCHNOW, CLINT HOWARD

XB
PC
PS2
GBA
GC

RETRO ACTIVE

GMR REINVESTIGATES CLASSICS OF THE PAST. LET YOUR FREAK FLAGFLY

INCREDIBLE CRISIS PUSH THE PANIC BUTTON

NOVEMBER 2000 FOR PLAYSTATION

➔ Totally bizarre, and hands down one of the funkiest titles we've played, *Incredible Crisis* deftly mixes the mundane with the outrageous, otherworldly, and just plain odd.

Twenty-four minigames illustrate a most incredible day in the life of harried salaryman Taneo and his family. As they set out for work, the market, and school, an extraordinary and otherworldly series of coincidences unfolds, leaving the hapless family diffusing bombs, rocking out with robbers, balancing atop flagpoles, and hurtling down the freeway in a rickety stretcher. All that, and an enraged 12-story-tall pink teddy bear.

NOW...

Dig minigames? Then dig this now, as this racy, comical crowd-pleaser has aged nicely. Sometimes, simplicity is best.

HARD TO FIND

GMR 7¹⁰

THEN...

At a measly \$20, incredible Crisis caught us off guard with its goofy gameplay. Kudos to Titus for taking a chance on this gaming gem.

GMR 7¹⁰



➔ Kick out the jame, tell a robbery, shop, negotiate alien invasions—all that, and the most critically charged Ferris wheel ride of your life!

POY POY PARTY ANIMALS UNITE

SEPTEMBER 1997 FOR PLAYSTATION

➔ Folks looking for a little multiplayer head-bashing madness usually lean toward games of the *War of the Monsters*, *Super Smash Bros.*, *Melee*, or *Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee* variety. Of course, if you had any taste, you'd be playing *Power Stone*, but that's another matter entirely. Still, if you've played those games, you might want to investigate an underappreciated nugget for ye olde PlayStation: *Poy Poy*.

Now nearly six years old and looking none the worse for wear (thanks to its clean, Gouraud-shaded graphics), *Poy Poy* was the first next-generation title to challenge *Bomberman*'s claim to the multiplayer party-game throne. Four players, provided someone has an elusive

Multitap, can get in on the chaos in either Exhibition mode or the *Poy Poy* Cup, which is divided into Junior, Senior, and Master Cup challenges. Six diverse stages (Desert, Robots, Park, Moai Land, Flat Land, Practice, and Iceberg) provide different indigenous factors to consider (Iceberg level is slippery—go figure), a lesson Sega's *Super Monkey Ball* clearly took to heart in its own minigames. Adding to the *Poy Poy*-ness are *Psyche Gloves*, each of which had different superpowered effects—players can purchase new gloves or upgrade old ones with their winnings. Konami made a sequel to *Poy Poy* (*Poiter's Point 2*) that was, sadly, released only in Japan. **1C**

James Mietke

NOW...

It may not stand up to glossy games like *Smash Bros.*, but the purity of *Poy Poy*'s madness remains just as enjoyable now.

OBTAINABLE

GMR 7¹⁰

THEN...

A party person's personal glossaire, *Poy Poy* gave picky players plenty of PlayStation punch for their precious pesos in parties past.

BELLE OF THE BALL

GMR 8¹⁰



➔ *Poy Poy* is, if nothing else, a great party game. It would be scary to see how good a next-gen sequel could be on PS2.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

THIS MONTH, WE REMEMBER...TURBOGRAFX-16

➔ The brainchild of electronics giant NEC, the TurboGrafx-16 once seemed slated to wrestle dominance of the console market from Nintendo's NES. Known in Japan as the PC Engine, the TurboGrafx-16 came stateside in 1989, boasting a brawny 16-bit graphics chip, a massive library of Japanese titles, an optional CD-ROM drive (a console first) and, oh, one controller port.

While the PC Engine dominated the Japanese market at the time, the TG-16 was released against the No. 1 NES, and debuted head to head against the United States incarnation of Sega's (unsuccessful in Japan) Mega Drive, the Genesis.

Despite a strong debut and several hardware variations, the TurboGrafx-16 failed to find success and fell into obscurity over the following four years due to poor business choices and prohibitively priced add-ons such as the CD-ROM drive. Equally dismal were sales of the ambitious TurboExpress, a chunky, linkable handheld TG-16 that featured a snazzy backlit LCD, optional TV Tuner add-on, and a healthy appetite for AA batteries.

While solid, enjoyable exclusives such as *Bomb's Adventure*, *Military Madness*, and *Blazing Lazers* made the console a contender, critical genres such as sports games were woefully underrepresented. Text and speech translation needs kept many RPGs from ever reaching U.S. shores (cult favorite *Ys* is a notable exception).

In response to Sega's own CD-ROM add-on (1992), the TG-16 and TG-CD were folded into a single system entitled the Turbo Duo, which featured increased memory capacity, a slimmer sticker price (\$200), and an appallingly misguided



➔ Clockwise, from top: The original TurboGrafx 16, TurboExpress, from 's badass beat 'em up *Ys* (and the TurboGrafx spokes-caveman *Bomb*).

marketing campaign. However, Genesis' own, memorable ads (SEGA!) and a solid library of U.S.-friendly sports and arcade titles ensured that Sega had, for the time being, won the console war. ☘

Key Titles: *Bomberman*, *Cadash*, *Chase HQ*, *Davis Cup Tennis*, *Devil's Crush*, *Blazing Lazers*, *Lords of Thunder*, *MotoRader*, *Ninja Spirits*, *R-Type*, *Splatter House*, *Super Star Soldier*.



GMR TREASURE HUNTER

Why pay exorbitant auction prices for these games 2morrow when you can find them 2day?

RANK	TITLE	SYSTEM	RATING
01	R-TYPE DELTA (AGETEC) The series' first excursion into 3D, and a total blast. Multiple ships, classic R-type difficulty, and excellent visuals make this a winner.	PS	8
02	CHU CHU ROCKET (SEGA) Cats like to eat mice, and that is why you are compelled to save thousands of high-speed rodents in this brilliant party/puzzle game from Sonic Team.	DC	8
03	ZERO DIVIDE (TIME WARNER) You might laugh now, but back in the day, this was the PlayStation's best alternative to <i>Virtua Fighter</i> . Robots kicking parts off each other is cool, man.	PS	7
04	MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH (WORKING DESIGNS) It only took Working Designs 14 years (or something like that) to release this game, but its hard work paid off. A glossy, short, and fun RPG.	SS	8
05	SOUL CALIBUR (NAMCO) Did you know <i>Soul Calibur</i> still looks better than 75 percent of the games on Xbox today? We do, and that's why we get our kicks on Route 66.	DC	10

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GMA'S EXHAUSTIVE GUIDE TO THE ONLY GAMES THAT MATTER

BUYER'S GUIDE

PS2 TOP 100 A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	IGN RATING
.hack//Infection	Bandai	The world's first MMORPG, but this time the Q stands for "offline." Comes packed with a DVD of the animated series.	9
Aggressive Inline	Acclaim	From the makers of <i>Dave Mirra BMX</i> comes a just-as-playable inline skating game with a simple trick system and large levels.	8
ATV Offroad Fury	Sony	The key to being a successful ATV offroader lies in launching yourself through the air as often as possible. A fun and floppy racer.	9
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Interplay	A beautiful-looking <i>Dungeons & Dragons</i> -based hack-and-slash that can be played cooperatively with another player.	8
Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter	Capcom	An RPG that forces you to die and start over multiple times? It sounds ridiculous, but it actually works.	8
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim	An aggressive driving simulator that defies the rules of physics. Includes a dedicated Crash mode for aspiring demolition derby stars.	8
Capcom vs. SNK 2	Capcom	Take the best elements of <i>Street Fighter</i> and <i>King of Fighters</i> , and you'll have the best thing going on in the world of 2D combat.	9
Contra: Shattered Soldier	Konami	After numerous shoddy attempts to bring the classic Contra gameplay to a next-gen system, Konami finally gets it right.	9
Crazy Taxi	Acclaim	As good as opening your PlayStation 2, rigging Dreamcast hardware inside, and then loading up a DC build of <i>Crazy Taxi</i> .	8
Dance Dance Revolution: DORMax	Konami	Before, if you wanted to play DDR, you had to subject yourself to Joe and Jane Public. Now, you can embarrass yourself at home.	8
Dark Cloud 2	Sony	Improves upon the first one in every way imaginable. Building and upgrading weapons to your liking is a blast.	9
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	Acclaim	Before turning to Larry Flynt for inspiration, XXX was based on Dave Mirra, and it actually focused on—get this—biking.	7
Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore	Tecmo	Before the entire series went Xbox exclusive, Team Ninja's gang of jiggy grapplers found a temporary home on PS2.	8
Dead Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	One of the best PC games of 2000 is ported faithfully to PS2. Upgrade your character's skills and attributes as you see fit.	8
Devil May Cry	Capcom	Did you know <i>Devil May Cry</i> was going to be <i>Resident Evil 4</i> before it was spun off into its own series? Oh, you did? Nevermind then.	7
Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei	Melee combat set to the history of ancient China. Enemies number in the hundreds along branching story paths.	7
Escape from Monkey Island	Sony Online	LucasArts has a fine tradition of putting out excellent graphical adventure games, and this latest character is no exception.	7
EverQuest Online Adventures	LucasArts	PS2 owners finally get to see what the whole <i>Everquest</i> thing is about—and will never be seen again.	7
F1 2002	EA Sports	Minor refinements over the 2001 version may not be enough to justify the upgrade, but it's still a solid F1 game.	8
Final Fantasy X	Square EA	The PS2's first <i>Final Fantasy</i> does away the traditional overworld, but introduces full voice acting. Artistically beautiful, as always.	9
The Getaway	Sony	Opinions vary wildly on this British-themed gangster (not gangster) game. Even the British can't agree!	7
Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec	Sony	Core gameplay is unchanged, but the graphics get a complete overhaul, which makes <i>GT3</i> the best-playing/looking sim on the market.	10
Grand Theft Auto III	Rockstar Games	A phenomenon of both gameplay and sales. A free-roaming interactive mobster film that's sold more than 8 million copies to date.	7
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	Rockstar Games	As bad boy Tommy Vercetti, there's something indescribably cool about cruising Vice City's beach strip while rocking to "Billie Jean."	10
Guilty Gear XX	Sony	Tired of waiting for <i>Street Fighter 4</i> ? This one should more than compensate. Great visuals, great control, and great extras.	8
Half-Life	Sierra	After it was cancelled for Dreamcast, a console version of this PC classic didn't seem very likely. But here we are.	8
Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland	Natsume	It's a farming simulator. It's fun. These two statements may seem wildly incongruous, but somehow, <i>Harvest Moon</i> makes it work.	7
High Heat 2004	Eidos	The best ball game available this year. "Simulation" doesn't seem like a strong enough word to describe it.	7
Hitman 2	3DO	Most of the problems with the original <i>Hitman</i> have been fixed, making this one of the more rewarding action games on PS2.	7
Hot Shots Golf 3	Sony	Some golf games need something extra to attract gamers. How about arcade-style control, annoying taunts, and multiplayer modes?	7
Ico	Sony	An unappreciated work of art with challenging puzzles, fantastic lighting, and engrossing character relationships.	9
Jake Cocoon 2	Ubi Soft	A notable improvement over its predecessor, with the equally addicting feature of monster breeding.	8
Jedi and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	Sony	The studio that gave birth to <i>Crash Bandicoot</i> brings a couple new mascots and a gorgeous new 3D world to PS2.	8
Jet X20	Sony	More extreme sports fun, but this time, it's all wet. Finishing is only half the battle; performing tricks factors into the final standings.	8
Kingdom Hearts	Square EA	When the amazing, talented artists from Square join forces with the amazing, talented artists from Disney, good things happen.	8
Klonoa 2: Lunatic's Veil	Namco	<i>Klonoa</i> became a rare find in the later days of PlayStation. The outstanding sequel looks to share the same fate. Grab it if you can.	8
Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	There's an option to play the famous endurance race true-to-life: 24 hours straight of driving. Better stock up on Mountain Dew.	8
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	EA Games	Anything bearing the valuable <i>Lord of the Rings</i> license will sell well. Happily, there's more to this best-of-all than just the name.	7
Madden NFL 2003	EA Sports	The series' first foray into online console gaming is a success. Everything you love about Madden can now be shared with strangers.	7
The Mark of Kri	Sony	A slick action game with innovative controls. Each button is assigned to a different enemy, allowing for combat with multiple targets.	8
Maximie: Ghosts to Glory	Capcom	It's the spiritual successor to the classic <i>Ghosts 'n' Goblins</i> , complete with heart bowers and insane difficulty.	8
MDK 2 Armageddon	Interplay	Much improved over the original Dreamcast incarnation, <i>MDK 2 Armageddon</i> is one of the better recent action games.	8
MDK of Honor: Frontline	Electronic Arts	A strong single-player campaign paves the way through the beaches of Normandy and the heart of France. Great audio.	8
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	Konami	There's a lot in this update: 350 VR missions, 150 alternate missions, five Snake Tales, and one skateboard. Yes, a skateboard.	9
Mighty Club	Rockstar Games	This enjoyable and energetic one-on-one street racer from Rockstar provides a refreshing change of pace from the usual fare.	8
Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon	Bandai	Giant robots are great, but basing them on the Gundam license with Capcom developing makes them greater, if that's even possible.	8
MotorGP	Namco	Solid motorcycle racing, but if you have a choice, go with the sequel. It's got twice the number of tracks, among other enhancements.	8
MotorGP 2	Namco	An excellent motorcycle game with an Arcade-like mode for novices and a Sim mode for those who want to get their hands dirty.	8
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	Hate turning left for hours? NASCAR games probably aren't your thing. But if you get it, <i>Thunder 2003</i> should be right up your alley.	7
NBA 2K3	Sega Sports	Yet another compelling reason to own a PS2 Network Adaptor. NBA2K3 is the best-playing game of hoops on the system.	9

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	CRITIC RATING
NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	An improvement over previous versions, with a heavier focus on the faster-paced aspects of the game as opposed to a true simulation.	8
NBA Street	Electronic Arts	All the trash-talking and showmanship of Inner city basketball, from the comfort of your suburban home. But why is it only for two?	8
NCAA Football 2003	EA Sports	A lot like Madden, only with exploited college kids, and marching bands. It's also the best college football game available.	9
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	EA Games	Strangely, the best version of it on the least-powerful hardware. Running from cops has never been this fun, or free of consequence.	9
NHL 2K3	Sega Sports	Sega's latest football effort compares nicely to the firmly entrenched Madden juggernaut, and even beats it in some areas.	8
NHL Blitz 20-02	Midway	So you like football games, but don't care for playcalling strategy, formations, and clock management? Blitz has been here for years.	8
NHL 2002	Electronic Arts	Hockey is played on ice, with six men trying to put a puck into the other team's goal. This is a good digital representation of that sport.	9
NHL 2K3	Sega Sports	For the more discerning hockey connoisseur, NHL2K3 has made great strides since its debut on the now-defunct Dreamcast.	9
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	Capcom	The effort put forward in defeating Nobunga in Onimusha has gone to waste, as he's risen from the dead and is appearing in the sequel.	8
Onimusha: Warlords	Capcom	Survival horror with a taste for feudal Japan, gorgeous artistic design, and a whole lot more action than its Resident Evil kin.	8
RAD: Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	It's hard to go wrong with giant robots blowing stuff up, but Enix's latest effort goes one step further with a novel control scheme.	8
Ratchet & Clank	Sony	Insomniac's terrific action-platformer has you jumping from world to world in search of new weapons and gadgets.	9
Rayman 2: Revolution	Ubi Soft	One of the best 3D platformers available, the Rayman franchise doesn't get the attention it deserves: It's good, and you should buy it.	9
Real Pool	Infogrames	It's real. It's pool. It's Real Pool. If for some reason it had curved tables, exploding balls, and flaming cues, then it would be fake pool.	8
Red Faction	THQ	A first-person shooter that features destructible environments, driveable vehicles, and a strong single-player campaign.	9
Resident Evil Code: Veronica X	Capcom	More of a true sequel than Resident Evil 3, its Dreamcast debut meant many fans missed out. Problem solved!	8
Rez	Sega	A fairly standard shooter dressed as a visual and aural masterpiece. Sadly unappreciated by the vast majority of the gaming world.	8
Ridge Racer V	Namco	The always enjoyable Ridge Racer series scores well, with thanks to solid control, an enthralling sense of speed, and a fitting soundtrack.	9
Rumble Racing	Electronic Arts	This fun arcade racer originally started out with the NASCAR license, but it was dropped in favor of original designs.	8
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	This Greek mythology-based action game is an update of the arcade and NES classic in name only. Fun combat and great music.	9
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega	ArCADE-style tennis perfection when it launched for the Dreamcast. It's holding up just as well on the PS2, too.	8
Silent Hill 2	Konami	A more creepy than downright scary, the Silent Hill series takes a more sophisticated, cerebral approach to the survival-horror genre.	8
The Sims	Electronic Arts	New money helps you figure out how to keep your Sim from pissing himself. Or, if you're like that, how to make him do it.	8
Sky Gunner	Allius	If you can look past the slowdown issue land it can be a pretty big issue at times, Sky Gunner is great shooting fun.	8
Sky Odyssey	Activision	A flight game that channels the spirit of Pilotwings, with mission-based gameplay and a large array of aircraft to pilot.	8
Sly Cooper and the Thieves' Raccoon	Sony	A solid platformer with a unique aesthetic and animations. Lacks a little in the challenge department, a little on the short side, too.	8
Smuggler's Run	Rockstar Games	In keeping with Rockstar's games, Smuggler's Run indulges the inner criminal in all of us.	8
SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	Sony	Possibly the best reason to own a PS2 Network Adaptor: The team-based military tactics work better online than off.	9
Spy Hunter	Midway	A re-creation of the classic that manages to avoid tarnishing all the good memories, which can't be said for a lot of "classic" remakes.	9
SSX	Electronic Arts	A surprisingly good snowboarder with over-the-top stunts and great course design, it stands out as one of the better PS2 launch titles.	9
SSX Tricky	Electronic Arts	SSX Tricky boasts a new set of insane gravity-defying and physically impossible stunts, not to mention all-new tracks and characters.	8
Sub Rebellion	Metro3D	Customizable submarines rule the waters of the future; Sub Rebellion is an action game that's strong on graphics but very entertaining.	8
Tekken Tag Tournament	Namco	Essentially Tekken 3 with enhanced graphics and a tag-teaming. Which isn't bad, considering Tekken 3 is a great game to begin with.	8
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Activision	Tenchu sneaked onto the list without us noticing. We were drunk on sake and telling tales of heroism, so that might be why.	8
Theme Park Roller Coaster	Electronic Arts	Sim City meets Six Flags. Design your own dangerous rollercoasters without fear of getting slapped with wrongful-death lawsuits.	8
TimeSplitters	Edios	Many responsible for N64's Goldeneye are also responsible for this, and it shows. A great shooter with loads of multiplayer options.	9
TimeSplitters 2	Edios	Everything good about the original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes, too.	9
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave	Cruise Tokyo's highways in search of less-than-legal street-racing action. Despite some visual issues, it's definitely worth checking out.	9
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Activision	Neverstoff dropped the two-minute time limit in Career mode, and added an array of objectives. Level design is a step up from THPS3.	9
Twisted Metal: Black	Sony	With the franchise safely out of the hands of 989 Studios, Twisted Metal makes a welcome return to its former, gruesome glory.	9
Twisted Metal: Black Online	Activision	If you buy a PS2 Network Adaptor, you get it for free. Which kind of makes sense, considering you can't play it without one.	10
Virtual Fighter 4	Sega	The Virtua Fighter series has always been finely crafted, and this version is no exception. The depth of this game is staggering.	8
War of the Monsters	SCEA	King Kong's agent wanted a cool \$20 mil for this fun beat-'em-up, but Sony balked and went with the less-recognizable Congar.	9
Wild Arms 3	Sony	A grand adventure with a Wild West theme, endearing characters, great music, and a refreshingly uncomplicated battle system.	8
Wipeout Fusion	Bam	The Designer's Republic touch may be missing, but the series' off-limited, never surpassed style of racing remains intact.	8
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega	WSB2K3 is the best-looking baseball game and has a great Franchise mode, but it's got some A.I. issues that need to be worked out.	8
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6	Konami	Feet down, the most natural-feeling soccer game ever. It lacks FIFA's presentation and licenses, but makes up for it in gameplay.	9
WWF SmackDown! Just Bring It	THQ	Even if this game scored a zero, it would still sell a truckload of copies. Such is the marketing power of Vince McMahon & Family.	8
Xenosaga	Namco	A massive RPG of epic story and length, Namco's now in charge of the Xeno series, and this is the first of many planned chapters.	9
Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner	Konami	Better enemies, better pacing, better music, better stages, and better weapons. What we're trying to say is, ZOE2's better than the first.	8

[BUY]

HOT SHOTS GOLF 3

➔ Summer's almost here, so dust off the driver and polish the putter for another round of Hot Shots Golf, the golf game for people who don't like golf games (and those who hurt themselves on Golden Tee machines). Warning: Constant taunting may result in punches to the head and neck.



[AVOID]

DRIVING EMOTION TYPE-S

➔ If you read this month's feature, you might be wondering why we didn't mention Square's Type-S. It's a dismal effort that felt like you were driving on a road of marbles with flat tires while slipping a Budweiser. The only emotion involved? Anger.



PC TOP 50 WHAT WAR IS GOOD FOR

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	OUR RATING
Aliens vs. Predator 2	Sierra	Three completely different first-person shooters combined into one dark and terrifying gaming experience.	9
Battle's Gate II: Shadows of Arnn	Interplay	The rare occasion when the sequel to a classic goes above and beyond its predecessor. Can't wait for III.	9
Black & White	EA Games	Highly conceptual "god-game" that has you ruling over mortals with a little help from a giant cow-monster.	8
Battlefield 1942	EA Games	Multplayer shooter set in WWII that lets you jump in and out of vehicles [even planes!] while battling dozens of your friends.	8
Civilization III	Infogrames	Sid Meier's classic just keeps rolling along, getting bigger and more complex while somehow managing to remain just as addictive.	10
Commandos 2	Eidos	Control a squad of elite commandos in WWII as they infiltrate, detonate, and assassinate across multiple battlefields.	8
Dialo II: Lords of Destruction	Bizzard	The sequel to the ultimate dungeon-crawling clickfest should please anyone who wasted their teens playing the first game.	8
Dungeon Siege	Microsoft	Hack and slash doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes, it can even be in beautiful 3D with no loading time between levels.	8
Enemy Engaged: Comanche v. Hukom	Empire Int.	Extremely realistic chopper sim that's not for the weak of heart or impatient of trigger finger.	9
EverQuest	Sony Online	The massively multiplayer RPG that's so addictive, it makes crack look like Sanka. Play this game at your own risk.	9
EverQuest: Scars of Velious	Sony Online	The expansion pack to EverCrack opens up new worlds, new characters, and tigers with boobies [finally!].	9
F1 2002	EA Sports	Delivers authentic yet accessible Formula One racing enjoyment for every open-wheel racing fan out there.	9
Fallout Tactics	Interplay	Squad-based tactical strategy game set in the same universe as the classic Fallout RPG that sets a new standard.	9
Freedom Force	EA Games	Clever use of strategy and RPG elements help to make this witty comic book superhero-themed game one of the best.	10
Front Office Football 2001	EA Sports	Football management simulation at its purest: Xs and Os mixed in with the complexities of drafting and the salary cap.	8
Ghost Recon: Island Thunder	Ubisoft	This top-notch mission pack makes a decent modern combat simulation into an outstanding one.	8
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Interplay	A shooter/strategy hybrid full of weird British humor, unique and beautiful 3D graphics, and naked lady sea monsters.	9
Grand Prix 4	Infogrames	It's a tough choice for Formula One fans, GP4 and F1 2002 are both worthy of your hard earned dollars.	9
Grand Theft Auto III	Rockstar Games	The poster child for all that's wrong in gaming is chock full of all that's fun in gaming. And you get to import your own MP3s.	10
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	Eidos	An almost-perfect blend of action and stealth. It's a humongous improvement over the first game.	9
IL-2 Sturmovik	Ubisoft	Amazingly realistic WWII flight sim covering a region seldom visited in computer games: the Eastern Front.	9
Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast	LucasArts	Yeah, the lightsaber battles are sweet, but Lando's cameo just about seals the deal. And is his ship fly or what?	9
Koban: Assassin's Gift	Strategy First	Surprisingly accessible fantasy-themed real-time strategy that's as much fun in single player as it is against other mages online.	9
Madden NFL 2003	EA Sports	Finally as good as all the superior console football games out there, this one is a gridiron classic on the PC.	9
Max Payne	G.O.D.	Despite some corny writing, this uberhip noir videogame feels like a movie, but plays like a great action game.	8
Medieval: Total War	Activision	Worth it just for the incredibly intense D-Day mission that almost matches the same scene in Saving Private Ryan.	9
Microsoft Flight Simulator 2002	Microsoft	The ultimate historical strategy game has everything from political intrigue to sweeping real-time battles.	9
The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	Bethesda	The definitive, open-ended RPG epic. Sort of (like GTA3), but with magic and Elves and all that D&D flava.	9
Mutross Madness 2	Microsoft	It's mud-splattering, off-road supercross fun with this free-wheeling dirtbike simulator from the makers of ATV Offroad Fury.	9
Myth III: The Wild Age	G.O.D.	Bungie's renowned magical real-time strategy title goes 3D and maintains its fantastic multiplayer reputation.	8
NASCAR Racing 4	Vivendi Universal	Superior simulation of the nail-biting sport of stock racing, with amazingly realistic physics matched by a sublime 3D engine.	9
Neverwinter Nights	Infogrames	If you're a D&D nerd then you already know, but buy this one especially for the multiplayer and user-made mods.	9
No One Lives Forever	Vivendi Universal	Austin Powers ain't got nothing on Cate Archer, the hottest digital chick with a gun since that old hag Lara Croft.	9
No One Lives Forever 2	Vivendi Universal	As funny and stylish as the original. 60s spy spoof (if that's even possible) and more fun to play, too.	9
Operation Flashpoint: Cold War Crisis	Codemasters	The first in the highly original series of combat sims, this soldier/light/tank sim went on to win COW's 2001 Game of the Year award.	9
Operation Flashpoint: Red Hammer	Codemasters	Letting you play as the bad guys is the sure way into our hearts. Especially when they're nasty Russians.	9
Operation Flashpoint: Resistance	Codemasters	Features and content worthy of a brand-new game, this is a benchmark expansion for a classic overlooked game.	9
Sacrifice	Interplay	Action/strategy hybrid defies the conventions of all the genres it touches, while making for a fantastically original multiplayer experience.	8
Serious Sam	G.O.D.	Brainless running and gunning is an underappreciated way to waste a couple hours with a great-looking game.	8
Sid Meier's Sim Golf	EA Games	SimGolf will have you laying out golf courses and building resorts like a virtual Robert Trent Jones.	8
Stronghold	G.O.D.	Castle-building strategy game that's part medieval architecture sim, part siege engine showdown-boiling oil and all.	10
The Sims	EA Games	It's impossible to categorize EA's addictive superbuckbuster life simulator, just like it's impossible to stop playing it.	8
The Sims: Hot Date	EA Games	Gamers everywhere, rejoice! Finally, a game where you can actually learn a thing or two about interacting with the opposite sex!	10
The Sims: House Party	EA Games	Get your soiree [not to mention your freak] on with this great addition to The Sims' amazing stable of add-on packs.	8
The Sims Online	EA Games	If you were merely a Sims addict before, all hope is now lost. All the world's a stage, and your online Sims persona can play any part.	9
The Sims: Unleashed	EA Games	Not just a great addition to EA's behemoth franchise, an essential one. Everyone needs a dog, or maybe a monkey.	9
Unreal II: The Awakening	Infogrames	Somewhat of a letdown in terms of story and gameplay, but good nonetheless. Call us in 5 years when our gaming rigs can handle it.	8
US Open 2002	Strategy First	Hard to find fault with this fine tennis sim, especially since the sport is so woefully underrepresented on the platform.	8
Warlords: Battlecry II	Ubisoft	RTS and RPG, two great flavors that go great together—especially when stirred together with a big gnarly wizard's staff!	8

[BUY!]

BATTLEFIELD 1942

→ We've reviewed the new expansion, but in order to play it, you'll need the original game. Hop into tanks, fighter planes, and ship turrets in an effort to take out the opposition.



[AVOID!]

MORTYR

→ While writing our Wolfenstein preview and Battlefield 1942 review, we came across a WW2 game you should avoid at all costs. It's hard to believe someone greenlighted a sequel to this mess.



➔ XBOX TOP 50 THE HALO ADAPTER IT'S NOT

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	OUR RATING
Apex	Atari	This racer is fantastic to look at and plays well enough to sit snugly between Project Gotham Racing and Gran Turismo on your shelf.	8
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Atari	A beautiful-looking Dungeons & Dragons-based hack-and-slash that can be played cooperatively with another player.	8
Blind: The Time Sweeper	Microsoft	This green-eyed keline can control the flow of time, but puzzles designed around that concept are lacking. Great idea, flawed execution.	9
Burnt	Edios	The Legacy of Kain story picks up where the original Blood Omen left off, with you in control of the evil yet likeable vampire Kain.	8
Burnout	Acclaim	An arcade racer with an emphasis on spectacular crashes, which—now that we think about it—defeats the purpose of competitive racing.	8
Cat Damage	Microsoft	Crazy cartoon car combat with great use of cat-shading and varied multiplayer options. It can quickly become repetitive, however.	8
Colin McRae Rally 3	Codemasters	Everybody's favorite rally racer Colin McRae has got a brand new game, featuring finely tuned physics and car damage.	9
Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller	Sega	It's hard to improve upon the original, but that didn't stop Sega from trying. Twice. The setting is new but it plays pretty much the same.	8
Dead or Alive 3	Ycimo	It's not the deepest of fighters, but it definitely competes for the best-looking prize. Plus, the girls are back in all their bouncy glory.	8
Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball	Ycimo	Pro tip: When playing DOAX, have your TV remote close by. If Mom bursts in, hit the surf button and flip to The History Channel. She'll be proud.	8
Fatal Frame	Ycimo	It's creepy. It's gory. It's the Tecmo game without the boos. Another of those games better enjoyed with the lights off.	8
Genma Onimusha	Capcom	An enhanced port of the PS2 game, Genma Onimusha adds improved graphics, available 5.1 audio output, and a new type of soul energy.	7
Halo	Microsoft	The definitive reason to own an Xbox. There are plenty of secondary reasons, sure, but no Xbox owner should be without Halo.	10
High Heat 2004	3DO	The best ball game available this year. "Simulation" doesn't seem like a strong enough word to describe it.	9
James Bond 007: NightFire	EA Games	Goldeneye set an impossibly high standard for the Bond license, but NightFire does an admirable job of re-creating the feel of the films.	8
Jet Set Radio Future	Sega	Jet Set Radio Future has substance and an overabundance of style. Sega simplified tagging in favor of a more robust trick system.	8
Madden NFL 2002	Electronic Arts	This crowded genre on Xbox, with three different franchises competing for your attention, Madden is always a safe bet.	9
Max Payne	Rockstar Games	The "bullet time" effect is the big draw of this action/shooter. Inspired by Hong Kong action flicks, set against a gritty New York City.	9
MechAssault	Microsoft	It's a good single-player game, but it really shines on Xbox Live, where you're pitted against other mech pilots.	8
Medal of Honor: Frontline	EA Games	A strong single-player campaign paves the way across the beaches of Normandy and through the heart of France. Great audio.	8
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	Konami	Includes the original MGS2: Sons of Liberty, five brand-new missions featuring Solid Snake, and a slew of challenging VR missions.	9
MotorGP: Ultimate Racing Technology	THQ	Different from Konami's MotoGP games of the almost-exact same name, but just as good. Can be played via system link or online.	9
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	Hate driving left for hours? NASCAR games probably aren't your thing. But if you "get it," Thunder 2003 should be right up your alley.	9
NBA 2K3	Sega Sports	Yet another compelling reason to sign up for Xbox Live, NBA2K3 is the best-playing game of hoops on the system.	9
NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	An improvement over previous versions, with a heavier focus on the faster-paced aspects of the game as opposed to a true simulation.	8
NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega	We're secretly hoping next year's version features an NCAA Rules Infraction mode. Think of the possibilities...	9
NFL 2K3	Sega	Sega's latest football effort compares nicely to the firmly entrenched Madden juggernaut, and even beats it in some areas.	9
NHL Hitz 20-02	Midway	"NHL Hitz" rhymes with "NFL Blitz." That's no mere coincidence. Hockey with no rules is just as fun as its lawless football counterpart.	8
Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee	Microsoft	Originally destined for PS2, the now-Xbox exclusive Munch's Oddysee is a clever action/puzzle game with a great deal of character.	9
Panzer Dragoon Orta	Sega	Aesthetically beautiful and a dream to play. See what Saturn owners were enjoying seven years ago (the original Panzer Dragoon is included).	8
Phantom Crash	Phantagram	The Xbox certainly isn't lacking in mech titles. The quirky, unique Phantom Crash has upgradeable mechs and a story-driven IP mode.	9
Project Gotham Racing	Microsoft	The refinement of the Kudos point system is the biggest difference between Project Gotham and its Dreamcast predecessor.	8
RallySport Challenge	Microsoft	This rally racer is one of the best examples of the Xbox's power. More arcade than simulation, with enough depth to please both camps.	8
Robotich: Battleroy	TDK Mediactive	Cat-shaded graphics effectively capture the look and feel of the classic '80s cartoon. Especially enjoyable for fans of the series.	8
Rocky	Ubisoft	The best boxing game you can get for your Xbox. A technical knock-out, considering there's not much competition.	8
Sega GT 2002	Sega	Sega's answer to the Gran Turismo phenomenon. Not quite as expansive in terms of tracks and cars, but better with the details.	8
Sennurui II	Microsoft	The second chapter of Yu Suzuki's opus sees our hero Yu traversing the streets of Hong Kong in search of his father's killer.	7
Silent Hill 2: Restless Dreams	Konami	A creepy port of a creepy game with a creepy bonus: a creepy extra episode of the creepy story. Play without lights for extra creepiness.	8
Star Wars Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast	LucasArts	As usual, the Star Wars universe inspires great aesthetic design to complement Raven Software's solid sense of game design.	9
Steel Battalion	Capcom	If you want to play this game, you'll have to shell out \$200 for the massive controller. For those with the cash, it's well worth it.	8
Test Drive	Atari	Race for pink slips on the underground circuit, and live out your Vin Diesel role-playing fantasy. Or just act normal and race cars.	8
The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	Bethesda	An exhaustive open-ended RPG that essentially allows you to make it up as you go along, with hundreds of people to talk to.	9
The House of the Dead III	Sega	While there's nothing overly wrong with it, HOTD3 just doesn't offer much that's new. There's no official first-party light gun, either.	9
TimeSplitters 2	Edios	Everything good about the [PS2] original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes.	8
ToeJam & Earl III	Sega	Toe Jam and Earl haven't seen action lately, but the funk is strong this time, and it's better to enjoy funk with a partner. Oh yeah.	9
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft	There's not much of a graphical upgrade from the PC version, but the interface and audio are improved. Goes great with Xbox Live.	8
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Ubisoft	Comparisons to Metal Gear Solid were inevitable. Splinter Cell holds its own, and even outdoes Konami's behemoth at times.	9
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Acclaim	If you have to have Tony Hawk 3, improved graphics and framerate and the custom soundtrack option make this the best version to get.	9
Unreal Championship	Atari	Mindless deathmarching with great weapon design and entertaining multiplayer modes, including the sport-like Bombing Run.	8
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega Sports	WSB2K3 is the best-looking baseball game and it has a great Franchise mode, but it's got A.I. issues that still need to be worked out.	8

[BUY!]

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

➔ The Slayer herself just announced that this is the final season of the fantastically witty series, so grab the *Buffy* merch while you can. This offering from The Collective is a great boot-em-up.



[AVOID!]

MIKE TYSON BOXING

➔ It's better than having him eat your children, but not quite as good as the other boxing games available, and nowhere near as endearing as *Punch-Out!!*. Let this one fade into Bolivian.



GAMECUBE TOP 50 LET THE SUNSHINE IN

TITLE	PUBLISHED	WHAT WE SAY	OUR RATING
All-Star Baseball 2004	Acclaim	The graphics keep getting better each year, but the gameplay isn't keeping pace. Nice presentation, but the batting interface needs work.	7
Animal Crossing	Nintendo	The game that never ends is based largely on routine chores, yard work, and interior decorating. So why is it so much fun to play?	9
Beach Spikers	Sega	Easy to pick up and easy to play, like Virtua Tennis. As with most arcade sports games, it's definitely better as a multiplayer affair.	8
Bombberman Generation	Majesco	A surviving member of the Old School, Bombberman has earned some tenure in industry. This time, he sports a cat-shaded look.	8
Burnout	Acclaim	An arcade racer with an emphasis on spectacular crashes, which—now that we think about it—defeats the purpose of competitive racing.	8
Cubivore	Ataris	A simple but compelling game of reproduction and cannibalism. Plus, you can get "hump points." You know you're interested.	7
Dark Summit	THQ	It's snowboarding set against some sort of nonsense about a secret government plot. The important part is that it's snowboarding.	7
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	Acclaim	Before turning to Larry Flynt for inspiration, XXX was based on the well-mannered Dave Mirra and actually focused on—get this—biking.	8
Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem	Nintendo	This game, if you let it, will mess with your head. The insanity effects are clever like first time and the scenery is downright creepy.	7
FIFA 2002	Electronic Arts	Though there's always room for improvement, EA's soccer series has been fairly decent. Plus, there's no real alternative yet.	7
Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee	Atari	Godzilla & Co. wrecking cityscapes and each other, with support for up to four players. What's not to like?	7
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	This Potter kid seems to be pretty popular, so the folks at EA decided to make a Zelda-esque adventure based on his magical exploits.	7
High Heat 2004	3DO	The best ball game available this year. "Simulation" doesn't seem like a strong enough word to describe it.	7
The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker	Nintendo	It looks and feels like the best Zelda game ever, but sailing back and forth in the overworld just feels like work.	9
Lost Kingdoms	Activision	GameCube's first RPG, featuring fast-paced battles, a multiplayer mode, and a well-designed card system. Worth checking out.	7
Luigi's Mansion	Nintendo	We all wanted Mario at launch, and we got this. Like getting socks for Christmas, it's good and comfortable, but not what we wanted.	7
Madden NFL 2002	Electronic Arts	Those who bought the GameCube version instead of the PS2 edition were treated to roughly the same game. Good for them, though.	8
Mario Party 4	Nintendo	There are few things better in life than three friends, Mario Party, and a healthy flow of alcoholic beverages (if you're legal, of course).	8
Metal of Honor: Frontline	EA Games	A new story of D-Day and the ensuing action on the French front lines. The GameCube version has a multiplayer mode the others don't.	7
Metrodroid Prime	Nintendo	As if they dissected Super Metroid, added a dimension, and put it back together again with slick graphics. In fact, it's exactly like that.	10
MLB Slugfest 20-04	Midway	What Bilz is to football, Slugfest is to baseball. If you can't sit through nine innings of the regular game, this one's for you.	7
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Games	It's apparently the fastest growing "sport" in America, and Thunder 2003 is packed under the hood, including an in-depth Career mode.	9
NBA 2K2	Sega	More of a sim than NBA Courtside, but it's the best basketball simulation available. Includes a great game of street ball, too.	7
NBA 2K3	Sega	Added to this year's version is a slick ESPN interface, an upgraded Franchise mode, and a fresh class of rookies.	7
NBA Courtside	Nintendo	No longer under the Nintendo development umbrella, Left Field's final installment of the Courtside series is a worthy b-ball game.	8
NBA Street	EA Sports	The spirit of NBA Jam lives on, but with 3-on-3 instead of 2-on-2. The fact that multiplayer makes out of four instead of four is suspicious.	8
NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega	We're secretly hoping next year's version features an NCAA Rules Infraction mode. Think of the possibilities.	8
Pac-Man World 2	Namco	Purists will yell "HERESY!" at the new Pac-Man who can take multiple hits. People who actually enjoy good games will ignore them.	7
Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II	Sega	Unhealthily addictive. The pursuit of rare items helps one ignore the somewhat repetitive battle [and the \$9 monthly fee].	7
Pikmin	Nintendo	Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto got the idea for this quirky strategy game from observing his personal garden. What kind of garden?	9
Resident Evil	Capcom	This remake could almost be described as a new game. But is it really Resident Evil without the laughably bad voice acting?	8
Resident Evil 0	Capcom	This one actually is a brand new game, with significant changes such as droppable items and the dirty-sounding partner-swapping.	8
Sega Soccer Slam	Sega	An arcade-style soccer game with off-the-wall characters, arenas, and power-ups. And it's still better than Virtua Striker!	8
Skies of Arcadia: Legend	Sega	If you missed it on Dreamcast—and many of you did—you've been given a second chance. It's even got new characters.	8
Smuggler's Run: Warzones	Rockstar Games	An enhanced version of Smuggler's Run 2, with new vehicles and maps and an expanded multiplayer mode with support for four players.	7
Sonic Adventure 2: Battle	Sega	Remember when you and your friends held quite a bit of Sonic vs. Mario debates? Don't you feel silly now? Or at least a little odd?	7
Sonic Mega Collection	Sega	Sure, the Sonic games were great, but \$40 may be too steep an asking price for a collection of old and unenhanced games.	7
Star Fox Adventures	Nintendo	Rare's last Nintendo effort took forever, but Star Fox Adventures takes its inspiration from The Legend of Zelda—and that ain't bad.	7
Star Wars: Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader	LucasArts	At times, Rogue Leader synchs closely with scenes from the movies. Impressive when you consider it took only nine months to make.	7
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	All the intense action of the movie, without melodramatic writing and weak acting. As with many GC games, multiplayer is a big draw.	7
Super Mario Sunshine	Nintendo	Maybe not quite as groundbreaking as Super Mario 64 was, but even when Nintendo "misses," it makes a big splash.	9
Super Monkey Ball	Sega	Monkeys in balls! An exceptional game based on a simple concept; some of the later levels will eat you for lunch.	8
Super Monkey Ball 2	Sega	Even more monkeys in balls running around for your entertainment! The extra game modes add quite a bit to the simple concept.	7
Super Smash Bros. Melee	Nintendo	A Nintendo fanati's dream, if only for the exhaustive gallery of collectible Nintendo Inkludables. Plus, you can beat the crap out of Jigglypuff.	9
TimeSplitters 2	Bidos	Everything good about the original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes.	7
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	For those with the DualShock hardwired into their psyche, switching over to the oddly-shaped GameCube controller can prove difficult.	8
Virtua Striker 2002	Sega	arcade soccer that was all the rage in Japan, despite severely limited control over player and ball movement. Looks nice, though.	8
Wave Race: Blue Storm	Nintendo	Nintendo messed with the controls when they didn't need any messing with, making Blue Storm pale in comparison to its predecessor.	8
WWE Wrestlemania X8	THQ	Ratings have cooled and Stone Cold has had some run-ins with John Law, but that's irrelevant, as wrestling games will always sell.	6
X-Men: Next Dimension	Activision	If you absolutely must have an X-Men fighting game, this is your best bet. Better fighters exist, but they don't feature Wolverine.	7

[BUY!]

ETERNAL DARKNESS

Ne, Nintendo, those sales charts aren't an insanity effect—Eternal Darkness didn't sell as many copies as you had hoped. Maybe because you advertised the game at 4 a.m. during the World Cup?



[AVOID!]

SMASHING DRIVE

➔ If you liked the arcade version, it might be a decent purchase. For everyone else who wants a fast arcade-racer with a lot of depth and extra modes, keep waiting patiently for Burnout 2.



PS1 TOP 25 MILLIONS AND MILLIONS SERVED

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	CRITIC RATING
Castlevania: Symphony of the Night	Konami	Like <i>Super Metroid</i> , with vampires instead of Metroids. And it was on PlayStation. A certifiable classic.	9
Chrono Cross	Square EA	It wasn't quite the <i>Chrono Trigger</i> sequel most people expected, but it's a magnificent game in its own right.	10
Colin McRae Rally 2.0	Codemasters	Americans might be slow in recognizing the name, but race fans know the Colin McRae games were and are among the best.	9
Crash Team Racing	Sony	Countless mascot racers that flooded store shelves during the PlayStation era, and <i>Crash Team Racing</i> was the only good one. Really.	9
Einhander	Sony	"Einhander" is German for "awesome 2D shooter that should have won more than it did." That, or "one-handed." We're not sure.	9
Final Fantasy Anthology	Square EA	We're not exactly sure how two games out of a series of nine constitutes an "anthology," but they're good games nonetheless.	9
Final Fantasy IX	Square EA	The crystals return to the series, along with a four-member party, blue magic, and black mages. Biggs and Wedge, sadly, do not.	10
Final Fantasy VII	Sony	Brought RPGs into the U.S. spotlight, and contained the most debated plot twist of an era. We won't spoil it, but no, you can't.	9
Final Fantasy VIII	Square EA	Things were more "real" this time around—as real as chocobos, guardian forces, and time compression could be, anyway.	9
Gran Turismo	Sony	Of course it seems foolish now, but the replays had some of us doing double-takes to make sure we weren't watching real race footage.	9
Gran Turismo 2	Sony	More tracks, more cars, more races, more cars, more cars, more modes, and more cars. The second lap was even better than the first.	10
Madden NFL 2001	Electronic Arts	Don't call it a comeback, he's been here for years. Play a version of <i>Madden</i> in which the Rams could actually win with Kurt Warner.	10
Metal Gear Solid	Konami	Hideo Kojima's cinematic classic continues to impress, and its video was the first to unofficially win E3's Game of Show. Twice.	10
NFL GameDay '97	Sony	Helped to steal the football crown from <i>Madden</i> (only to fumble it right back a few years later).	9
NHL '98	Electronic Arts	A decent game of hockey, and one of the series' brighter spots. Played in college dorms throughout the country.	9
Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus	GT Interactive	An unlikely hero rises up to overthrow big business. It's very clever... and the political overtones are great for that last-minute term paper.	9
Point Blank	Namco	If <i>Time Crisis</i> taught us to be killers, then surely <i>Point Blank</i> taught us how to shoot up a car before it fills on 40 stories up.	9
Resident Evil 2	Capcom	Zombies running amok in Raccoon City, more B-movie video acting running amok on your speakers. Enough to fill two discs this time!	9
Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco	Plenty of cars, silky-smooth graphics, and of all things, a Story Mode. Best played with the Jagcon controller.	9
Street Fighter Alpha 3	Capcom	Another well-executed arcade port, and arguably the best version of <i>Street Fighter</i> to grace the system.	9
Tekken 3	Namco	An amazing conversion, given the difference between the arcade and PlayStation hardware at the time. Set the standard for bonuses.	10
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Activision	Some say it's the best installment of the series in terms of control, music, and course design. So do we, actually.	10
Twisted Metal 2	Sony	The granddaddy of vehicular combat games. Sweet Tooth is damning evidence that clowns and anything relating to clowning is evil.	9
Warrior Armageddon	Halo Int.	A highly addictive turn-based strategy game, and a practical alternative to throwing grenades at the sidewalk after a rain shower.	9
You Don't Know Jack	Sierra	The ultimate judge of useless-yet-impressive knowledge, assuming you still can't find your <i>Star Wars</i> edition of <i>Trivial Pursuit</i> .	9

GBA TOP 25 WHERE OLD MARIOS GO TO DIE

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	DESCRIPTION	SCORE
Advance Wars	Nintendo	Turn-based military strategy that should be a part of everyone's GBA library. Once you get sucked in, it's hard to pull yourself away.	8
Baseball Advance	THQ	There are only four stadiums and no multiplayer, but it's still a great game of baseball.	9
Castlevania: Circle of the Moon	Konami	<i>Castlevania</i> was meant to be played in two dimensions, and this game shows why. A complex card system governs your special abilities.	9
Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance	Konami	The second <i>Castlevania</i> is one of the best reasons to own a Game Boy Advance. The colors are brighter and the bosses are bigger.	10
ChuChu Rocket	Sega	Highly addictive and highly cute puzzle action from Sega. Best played with friends.	9
F-Zero Maximum Velocity	Nintendo	An enhanced port of the classic SNES racer with improved graphics and four-player support.	8
Golden Sun	Nintendo	A deep combat engine and brilliant graphics make this a top RPG available on GBA.	9
GT Advance Championship	THQ	A great-looking/playing racer with one major drawback: a tedious password save system. If you can get past that, well, good for you.	9
Kirby: Nightmare in Dream Land	Nintendo	A remake of the NES classic <i>Kirby's Adventure</i> with updated graphics and multiplayer support.	9
Klonoa: Empire of Dreams	Namco	Straying from the original formula, this <i>Klonoa</i> is more of a puzzle game than a platformer, with great graphics and sound.	10
Konami Crazy Racers	Konami	A Mario Kart-esque mascot racer filled with classic Konami characters like Dracula, Goemon, and MOS's Ninja.	9
Link: The Legend of Zelda	Nintendo	Invite three friends and you've got a bona fide <i>Zelda</i> party. Drink Red Medicine till you puke and skinny dip in Lake Hyli!	9
Lufia: Ruins of Lore	Atlus	Perennially overshadowed by Square's offerings, the <i>Lufia</i> series is just as engaging as <i>Final Fantasy</i> . It's also more challenging.	8
Lunar Legend	Ubi Soft	The anime cut-scenes and superb voice acting may be gone, but the great <i>Lunar</i> gameplay and story remain intact.	8
Mario Kart: Super Circuit	Nintendo	A balanced blend of <i>Super Mario Kart</i> and <i>Mario Kart 64</i> that even includes all the tracks from the former.	8
Klonoa: Empire of Dreams	Capcom	A difficult yet engaging installment of the <i>X</i> side story played as Zero, who is equipped with an arm cannon and beam saber.	8
Metroid Fusion	Nintendo	The follow-up to <i>Super Metroid</i> is eight years late, but the wait was well worth it. An adventure that ends way too quickly.	9
Phantasy Star Collection	Sega	Straightforward classic RPG action that's been overlooked for far too long. Includes <i>Phantasy Star</i> 1, 2, and 3.	9
Rayman Advance	Ubi Soft	Rayman is just as good in 2D as he is in 3D. It looks great and provides a decent challenge.	8
Super Mario Advance	Nintendo	Aside from the odd naming system, you can't really complain about a portable version of <i>Super Mario Bros.</i>	8
Super Mario Advance 2: Super Mario World	Nintendo	There's really not much else that can be said except "portable <i>Super Mario World</i> ," and "you should buy it."	9
Super Puzzle Fighter II	Capcom	Sometimes, you just get bored with Tetris. <i>Puzzle Fighter II</i> is a fantastic port of a fantastic and highly addictive game. Buy it now.	9
Tactics Ogre: The Knight of Lodis	Atlus	An incredibly deep strategy RPG with a branching story line and a rewarding battle system.	9
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	It's amazing how they managed to cram <i>Tony Hawk</i> into a cartridge while keeping the essence of the game true to the console version.	9
Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3	Nintendo	Yoshi is the star of this show, one of the greatest 2D platformers ever put to silicon. There are even a couple of new bonus levels.	8

NEXT ISSUE:

SOMETHING WICKED

THIS WAY COMES...

GMR **05**
AVAILABLE MAY 1ST NATIONWIDE



HE'S GOT MORE MATURITY OZZING OUT OF HIS...WELL, BETTER NOT GO THERE

➔ Eh? What? Ah, fer Pete's sake—can't you kids leave me alone? What's it going to take? A pit bull and a shotgun barrel in your face? I'm old and I'm tired and I don't have time for this nonsense. Let an old man die in peace!

"Yeah, but Game Geezer, we really wanted to know what you thought of the new Zeldas game! Aren't those graphics fugly?!"

Listen, you punks. You don't know from fugly. Believe me, I know fugly. Just take a look at Mrs. Geezer over there. No, don't wake her up, and no, don't close her mouth. I like watching the flies swirl around like that. Gives me something to live for.

The point is, you kids don't know how good you have it. Is Zeldas fugly? Sheesh. That game couldn't be more beautiful if Anna Kournikova were dancing naked in it. I'm serious! Anyway, I got enough JPEGs of her lying around already. You wanna buy some? Just \$10 a CD.

"Uh, Mr. Geezer—you were talking about Zeldas?"

Huh? Oh yeah! Course I was! I knew that. What I'm saying is that you punks are spoiled rotten! Why, when I

was a boy, "cool graphics" was two damn lines and a dot. Png! That's all we had! Sometimes, we didn't even have that much. We had to actually read text and imagine it in our heads! Yeah, I know—you kids can't read because you're all stupid, rotting your brains on SpongeBob SquarePants and crap like this magazine. Fools! Why don't you drop this rag right now, pick up some Tolstoy, and give yourself an education for a change!

I've never seen a bigger group of whiners in my whole long, weary life. I'll tell you something for nothing. All you babies with next-generation consoles, just shut up already. These games look better than you deserve. Even the new GameCube version of *Ocarina of Time* looks good, let alone *Wind Waker*.

I don't know what all the hoo-ha is about, anyway. Oh yeah, it's too "cartoony" and "kiddie." Yeah, because you're all a bunch of real mature, hard-assed macho men, right? Pansies! Here's a news flash, sissyboy: If the only way you can prove how good of a man you are is by deciding which games are "adult" enough for you, then you might as well size yourself up to that dress

and pinafore, missy, because you've got a long way to go.

Real men, like yours truly here, don't get nervous playing "kiddie" games. We don't look for videogames to validate our maturity. What we do is: We appreciate the genius of Miyamoto and the bold, utterly original look of *Wind Waker*, and then we lift our heads to the sky and thank God we're living in a world where this guy gets to keep making games.

"Too kiddie," you say? Bah! Like anything could be "too kiddie" for you girls. You want realism? Here's a thought: Turn off your damn console and go outside for a change. Plenty of realism out there. Hopefully, you'll fall down and break your head and get some sense knocked into you.

So, go on! Get outta here! Leave me alone! I just got the power bracelets on Fire Mountain, and now me and Link've got some serious ass-whoopin' to do, cartoon style. 



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